



# The Sword & The Plow

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## Why the Single Millennium Model Forces a Futurist Eschatology

by

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The imagery of Revelation twenty is probably the most difficult in the Bible. Central to its imagery is the enigmatic “millennium.” Whole schools of eschatology have grown up around the millennium, which attempt to explain its meaning and relation to the second coming of Christ. Pre-, Post-, and A- millennialism each hold that a single millennium is contemplated by the text. Not coincidentally, each is also a futurist school of eschatology. What is the connection between these? Is there something inherent in the single millennium model that makes it a logical corollary of futurist eschatology? The purpose of this article will be to demonstrate that, in fact, there is a connection between the single millennium model and futurist eschatology, and that Preterists *must* adopt a Bimillennial interpretation of Revelation twenty to avoid internal inconsistency in their eschatological scheme.

### **Basic Interpretative Approaches**

There are two basic approaches to Revelation twenty. These see the images as either 1) literal and chronologically progressive, or 2) symbolic and recapitulatory. Premillennialism is an example of the first sort in that it sees a literal thousand years in Revelation twenty’s imagery, which it places after the destruction of the beast,

the kings of the earth, and false prophet in chapter nineteen. Thus, the events depicted in chapter twenty are *progressive* in that they follow those of chapter nineteen, *literal* in that they foretell the actual duration of the events described; *viz.*, a thousand years. On the other hand, Preterism belongs to the symbolic and recapitulatory school. *Recapitulatory*, in that it views the images of chapter twenty, not as sequential to, but *synchronous* with those of chapter nineteen, describing under different symbols events variously portrayed elsewhere in the book; *symbolical*, in that the “thousand years” do not entail a literal duration of time. A third approach combines these, marrying symbolic with chronological progression. Certain schools of Amillennialism offer an example of this approach in that they interpret the millennium as a symbol for a period of indefinite length and duration concluding at the world’s end, but beginning after destruction of the beast, the kings of the earth, and false prophet in chapter nineteen. Foy E. Wallace Jr. is among this latter class, viewing the events of the Apocalypse through chapter nineteen as speaking to the persecution under Nero and the destruction of Jerusalem, but chapter twenty as surveying world history until the end, the battle of Gog and Magog as symbolic of the church’s struggle against various forms of world paganism throughout remaining time:

“After the catastrophic fall of Judaism, and the victory of the saints over the imperial persecutors, there was a renewed struggle of the church with heathenism, a spiritual conflict symbolized by Satan being *loosed out of his prison*. With Judaism removed from the path of the church, and the cessation of persecution by the imperial rulers, the way was opened for the expansion of Christianity, as foretold by Jesus in Matt. 24:31, and envisioned by John in Rev. 11:15. But it was not without opposition – the remaining enemy was heathenism. Satan’s theatre of activity in this struggle was not persecution, but spiritual and doctrinal: *And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth* – 20:8...This part of the vision was descriptive of the battle with heathenism, hence the reference to *Gog and Magog*...the mythical ruler of heathendom...As the beast was symbolic of the Roman empire, personified in the persecuting emperors, so was the *Gog and Magog* personification symbolic of the spiritual forces of heathenism launched against the church in the “battle” of *verse eight*...” (Foy E. Wallace Jr, *The Book of Revelation* (Foy E. Wallace Publications, 1966), pp. 417, 418)

We survey these schools to acquaint the reader with the basic issues facing interpretation of Revelation twenty and to help point out why a Bimillennial approach is necessary for Preterists to interpret the chapter consistent with a past-fulfillment perspective. For, as we shall see, the single millennium approach is the bed-fellow of futurist eschatology.

### The Problem Stated

As suggested by Wallace’s comments above, futurism creeps into the text surrounding interpretation of the millennium and the battle of Gog and Magog. The single millennium model forces the reader to adopt a futurist eschatology because the reign of the martyrs who die under the beast is followed by yet *another* contest prior to the second coming of Christ. The fact that the martyrs die under the beast (Rev. 20:4), a symbol universally associated by Preterists with the persecution under Nero Caesar, establishes the historical referent of the martyrs’ deaths, tying them to the first century. This is also shown by the fact they are beheaded (v. 4), a Roman form of execution. The persecution under Nero was to be the final crisis before the eschaton. It was to prepare the saints against the coming storm of persecution under the beast that the book of Revelation was written. But by wedding the martyrs’ reign to the binding of the dragon, the battle of Gog and Magog is made to *follow* the reign of the saints, thus creating a “second” final contest the saints must endure before the

end. Since there is *no* historical referent between the persecution under Nero Caesar and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 that this contest can conceivably point to, the reader is *logically* driven to the conclusion that the events depicted by the millennium and the battle of Gog and Magog are not yet fulfilled. The number of commentators who make this blunder is legion. Terry’s analysis is typical:

“At the end of the millennial period there is to be a loosing of Satan, a rising of hostile forces, symbolized by Gog and Magog (comp. Ezek. xxxviii, xxxix), and a fearful catastrophe, resulting in the final and everlasting overthrow of the devil – the culmination of the prophecy of Gen. iii, 15. This last conflict, belonging to a distant future, is rapidly passed over by the seer, and its details are not made know (verses 7-10). (Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics* (Hunt & Eason, 1890, reprinted Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1999), p. 376)

Others falling into this “*trap-for-the-unwary*” include Chilton and Russell.<sup>1</sup> Perceiving the necessity of a pre- A.D. 70 historical referent for Gog and Magog, Max King seeks to solve the dilemma by offering that Gog and Magog represents the revolt of the Jews from Rome, an unsatisfactory explanation if ever there was one:

“Thus, instead of Gog and Magog representing Gentile forces, they symbolize

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<sup>1</sup> “The specific point of the binding of the Dragon, therefore, is to prevent him from inciting the eschatological “war to end all wars,” the final battle – until God is ready. When God’s Kingdom-City is fully matured, then He will once more release Satan and allow him to deceive the nations for the final conflagration.” (David Chilton, *Days of Vengeance*, pp. 506.)

“We must consequently regard this prediction of the loosing of Satan, and the events which follow, as still future, and therefore unfulfilled. We know of nothing recorded in the history which can be adduced as in any way a probable fulfillment of this prophecy...The result of the whole is, that we must consider the passage which treats of the thousand years, from ver. 5 to ver. 10, as an intercalation or parenthesis. The Seer, having begun to relate the judgment of the dragon, passes in ver. 7 out of the apocalyptic limits to conclude what he had to say respecting the final punishment of the ‘old serpent,’ and the fate that awaited him at the close of a lengthened period called ‘a thousand years.’ This we believe to be the sole instance in the whole book of a excursion into distant futurity; and we are disposed to regard the whole parenthesis as relating to matters still future and unfulfilled.” (J. Stuart Russell, *The Parousia* (1887, T. Fisher Unwin, London; Republished 1983, 1999, Baker Books, Grand Rapids), pp. 522, 523.)

heathen Israel in her final opposition to the church...But in what way could it be said that national Israel compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city, or new Jerusalem? Since their power to persecute was destroyed, this final battle was evidently an effort on the part of Israel to establish her claims as the true Israel of God, and to show that she was the queen and no widow (18:7). She would now destroy the church by establishing herself in Palestine as a power of world renown. To accomplish this, she set out to throw off the Roman yoke." (Max R. King, *The Spirit of Prophecy* (Warren, OH, 1971), p. 353)

The problem with King's analysis is that it totally fails to answer the description of the battle of Gog and Magog in either Ezekiel or Revelation, both of which depict it as an attack upon the church, not a revolt from Rome. (Cf. Ezek. 38, 39) Moreover, how the Jews could destroy the church by establishing themselves as a power merely *in Palestine* is not explained. For that matter, can anyone really believe that the men who prosecuted the war against Rome - Eleazar, who was over the Zealots, John of Gischala, who was over the Galileans, and Simon, who was over the Idumeans - men who were the worst sort of criminals and tyrants, had any religious scruples about the church? Clearly, it was not to destroy the church that the Jews revolted from Rome, but to secure national liberation. In offering this explanation, King is simply grasping at straws. Still, King's analysis serves to underscore the dilemma created by the single millennium approach to Rev. 20:1-10 and the battle of Gog and Magog.

### **Recapitulation and the Battle of Gog and Magog**

One part of the solution to the battle of Gog and Magog lies in recognizing the fact that numerous times Revelation retraces its steps to cover different aspects of previous passages and events under new symbols. Thus, the four horsemen of the Apocalypse in chapter six are depicted as the four winds of heaven restrained in Rev. 7:1, but loosed in chapters eight and nine. The plagues in chapters eight and sixteen are not new plagues, but expansions upon the plagues under the horsemen in chapter six. And the great day of the Lord in Rev. 6:17 is the same as the great day of God Almighty in Rev. 16:14. In the same way, Gog and Magog are not a second final battle the saints were to face before the end, it

was *the* final battle. One writer puts it this way:

"In 16:14 kings are called forth to *the battle*. In 19:19 the beast and kings of the earth come forth to *the battle*. In 20:8 Satan leads his host up to *the battle*. It seems clear that these three texts describe not three battles but one. The new point revealed in 20:8 (because Revelation never repeats itself merely for the sake of repetition; something new is revealed each time) is what happens to Satan as a result of this battle. Chapt 19 records what will happen to the beast and the false prophet as a result of their defeat in this battle. Here in 20:10 we learn what will happen to Satan." (Robert B. Strimple, *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond* (Zondervan, 1999), p. 125.)

In other words, the images of Rev. 20:1-10 are not progressive, but a recapitulation. There were not three end-time battles, but one; the battle of Gog and Magog is the *same* battle described elsewhere in Revelation under different symbols. In Rev. 16:14-16, the dragon, beast, and false prophet marshal their forces to the battle of Armageddon. In Rev. 19:17-21, the battle ends with the destruction of the beast and false prophet. (vv. 19, 20) The imagery of the battle is drawn from the battle of Gog and Magog. (Ezek. 39:17 *et seq.*) This establishes the identity of Armageddon and Gog and Magog; it also establishes the identity of Gog and Magog with the beast and false prophet. The beast is universally recognized in Preterist circles with the persecution under Nero Caesar. Nero's name adds up to six hundred, three score and six in Hebrew and he was the sixth emperor reigning when Revelation was penned. (Rev. 13:18; 17:10) Since the beast and false prophet perish in the battle of Gog and Magog (Rev. 19:19-21), it is clear that this battle is a symbol for the spiritual contest of Nero and the Jews against Christ and the church. Thus, rather than falling into the trap of futurism by seeing the battle of Gog and Magog as a *yet-to-be-fulfilled* contest, we find instead the Neronean persecution clothed in other garments. (Actually, the symbolism is not new; reference to Gog and Magog in Rev. 20:8 only *appears* new. Most commentators fail to notice that the imagery of Rev. 19:17 *et seq.*, is taken from Ezekiel's description of Gog and Magog and, therefore, fail to notice the identity of these battles. It is this fact leads them to see Gog and Magog as progressive, rather than recapitulatory.)

Thus far, identifying the battle of Gog and Magog with the persecution under Nero is pretty

simple and straight forward. However, when the millennium is thrown into the mix difficulties arise. Under the single millennium approach, Gog and Magog *follow* the martyr's reign. However, since the martyrs died under the beast, a problem immediately arises. How can Gog and Magog be the persecution under Nero if it follows martyrdom of the saints? Clearly, in order to be the Neronean persecution, Gog and Magog must *precede*, not follow, the deaths of the saints. However, by marrying the reign of the martyrs to the binding of the dragon, Gog and Magog is wrested from its historical position and made to follow the deaths it actually caused! This is why many commentators, who otherwise see a first century context to Revelation, find themselves forced into the futurist model: Since the historical referent of the martyrs' death under the beast is fixed and certain, there is no other way to account for Gog and Magog except to see it as another, future contest of the church. Thus, by wedding the reign of the saints to the internment of the dragon the door to recapitulation is *closed*. However, rather than throw out the recapitulatory model, the answer is to unweave the binding of the dragon and the reign of the saints and adopt a bi-millennial approach.

### **Two Millennia Necessary for Recapitulation**

If the single millennium model closes the door to recapitulation, the two millennia model opens it. In fact, *without two millennia there can be no recapitulation* – Gog and Magog must forever remain a second final battle the saints were to face before the end – a battle about which scripture and history are both perfectly silent. When the binding of the dragon and the reign of the saints are chronologically wed, the battle of Gog and Magog *follows* the martyrdom and reign of the saints. (Rev. 20:4-8) This is because the battle follows the loosing of the dragon after its thousand-year imprisonment. (vv. 7, 8) But when the reign of the saints and binding of the dragon are treated as separate events, then the martyrdom and reign of the saints are allowed to assume whatever place the application of exegetical principles assigns - *viz.*, they will follow the battle of Gog and Magog rather than precede it. This is also true of Gog and Magog. When wed to the reign of the saints, Gog and Magog is forced into a futurist position as a second final contest before

the eschaton. However, by divorcing the reign of the saints from the binding of the dragon, the battle of Gog and Magog may assume its proper place in the scripture's eschatological scheme - *viz.*, it will precede the reign of the martyrs rather than follow it.

Why does John insert the reign of the saints in the midst of his narration about the binding and loosing of the dragon? For that matter, assuming that the battle of Gog and Magog is the persecution under the beast, why is the reign of the martyrs seemingly portrayed before the battle in which they die? The recapitulatory nature of the passage again must be borne in mind. The internment of the dragon has previously been alluded to by John under other symbols; *viz.*, the beast from the bottomless pit (Rev. 11:7); the mortal wound to the beast's head (Rev. 13:3); the beast that "was and is not and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit" (Rev. 17:8); and the earth swallowing the dragon's flood. (Rev. 12:16) The binding of the dragon is a parenthetical description of the events following the deadly wound to the beast's head, when it went down into the bottomless pit upon the collapse of the persecution that arose over Stephen. (Acts 7, 8; Rev. 12) In presenting the imagery of the dragon being bound, John is retracing his steps to present familiar themes under new symbols. What is new in chapter twenty is not the dragon's binding, but his *defeat*. The binding of the dragon is merely a brief recap of what has gone before to refresh our recollection and to set the stage for the dragon's ultimate destruction.

The reign of the martyrs has also previously been alluded to. In Rev. 14:9-13, the blessed state of the martyrs is mentioned, saying, "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture...Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandment of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." (Cf. Rev. 6:9-11) Those mentioned here are the *same* individuals portrayed in Rev. 20:4-6 as having

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## 8 Compelling Reasons Why: Christ Is Coming “Very, Very Soon” #5

By

Don Preston

We continue our examination of an article, sent to us by a reader, with the above title. With the approach of the millennium, “end times madness” is in full swing. Just last night (Tuesday evening, 8-3-99) I heard John Hagee, TV evangelist, proclaim that the coming of Christ is so near, “That I could disappear before this speech is completed. It is just that close.” Hagee’s reasons for believing the end of the age is so close parallel those of the article.

Reason #5 for believing in the imminent *parousia* (*presence*, translated *coming*) of Christ is said to be “Counterfeit spirituality is everywhere with cults and false christs (Matthew 24:24).”

Jesus did predict that there would be many false christs and prophets before the end. But did Jesus say this would not occur for thousands of years? No! Jesus said the false christs would appear in his generation “Verily I say unto you, this generation shall by no means pass away until all these things be fulfilled!” (Matthew 24:34) *Isn't it time to take Jesus at His word?*

Scripture affirms that many false prophets and would be christs appeared in the first century. Acts 5 records the presence of some who came at a very early time. In Acts 8, we find the story of Simon the sorcerer. Early church history says he claimed to be the Great God Himself. In Acts 13, we find Elymas the false prophet.

The Jewish historian Josephus, contemporary of Paul the apostle, says there were countless false messiahs and prophets running around all over the country side in the years leading up to the fall of Jerusalem. (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Book II, chapter XIII.)

Writing in the same generation to whom Jesus spoke, John penned these words, “Little children, it is the last hour. As you have heard that antichrist should come, even now there are many antichrists. Thereby we know that it is the last hour!” (1 John 2:18).

John referred to previous predictions of the coming of false christs and antichrists, this would be Matthew 24 and Thessalonians. They were to come in the last time. John said the predicted antichrists were present, and their presence proved that the critical climatic time had arrived. Could there be any more powerful declaration?

Some have attempted to mitigate John’s forceful statement by claiming that what he meant was that the presence of the antichrists proved that the Christian age had come! That is without merit! Are we to believe that the way to tell if the kingdom of Christ is established is to look around for antichrists? Are we to believe that antichrists are the distinguishing and identifying mark of the Christian Age? This argument is a specious attempt to avoid John’s emphatic declaration that the end of the age was near 2000 years ago!

Thus, to claim that Jesus’ *parousia* is near today because of the presence of false prophets and messiahs is to deny Jesus’ statement that His prophecy would be fulfilled in His generation, and it ignores the historical and Biblical testimony that great numbers of false messiahs did appear in that generation. It also denies John’s emphatic, *and inspired*, declaration that the time of the end had come 2000 years ago! To apply those predictions to the modern generation is a misapplication of scripture.

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Say “No!” to the New World Order



(Cont'd from page four)

won the martyr's crown. Their deaths under the dragon, beast, and false prophet are not a defeat, but a victory. They have overcome and are sit down with Christ in his throne. (Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:20, 21) Their appearance in Rev. 20 is merely parenthetical and shows that, while God is preparing the destruction of the dragon, the martyrs are safely and tenderly gathered to rest. The purpose of the passage is to instill courage in those that will suffer torture and death for Christ. It is similar to Paul's words to the Thessalonians: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others with have no hope." (I Thess. 4:13) Hence, Rev. 20:4-6 is a window into the blessed estate of the martyrs in hades alluded to in Rev. 14:9-13, and nothing more. What is new in chapter twenty is not the reign of the martyrs, so much as the *general resurrection* that follows the battle of Gog and Magog and the dragon's demise. The salient features of Rev. 20 may be stated thus:

<b>Dragon's Internment</b>	<b>Reign of the Saints</b>
Persecution that arose over Stephen - Internment in Tartarus (Temporary Cessation of Persecution) - Gog and Magog (Neronean Persecution) - Destruction and Defeat at Christ's Coming	Neronean Persecution - Reign in Paradise - General Resurrection at Christ's Coming

Thus, the recapitulatory nature of Rev. 20: 1-10 and the fact of two millennia are easily seen. Hence, it is a question of either a single millennium, progression, and futurism, or two millennia, recapitulation, and Preterism. There is no third alternative.

### Other Indicia of Two Millennia

Of course, allowing Gog and Magog to assume its proper historical place is *not* the only reason for opting for a Bimillennial approach. Other factors point to two millennia. The "thousand years" speaks to the timelessness of the hadean realm, the place of departed spirits. The dragon is interred a "thousand years" in tartarus (the bottomless pit), and the martyrs reign a "thousand years" in paradise with Christ. This reign is called the "first resurrection." The first resurrection is *real*; the souls of the saved were tenderly received by God into paradise. Paradise is also called "Abraham's bosom"

and the "third heaven." (Lk. 16:22; 24:43; II Cor. 12:2-4) However, whereas the reign of the saint is actual the binding of the dragon is merely symbolic. We would submit that it portrays God's providential binding of the world civil power during the period between the persecution that arose over Stephen and the persecution under Nero, when Claudius Caesar restrained the Jews and Romans from persecuting the church. After Claudius' death, Nero came to the throne and the "man of sin" and "son of perdition" was revealed (II Thess. 2: 3, 8) and the first imperial persecution begun. Because the binding of the dragon is merely symbolic, whereas the first resurrection was real, it is clear that they cannot be same "thousand years."

That there are two separate thousand-year periods contemplated by the text is also seen in the fact that there are two resurrections. The dragon's thousand-year internment ends when it is released to persecute the saints (v. 7; cf. Rev. 11:7; 17:8), but the thousand-year reign of the martyrs yields only to its *eternal* reign with Christ at the general resurrection when death and hades are destroyed. (Rev. 20:14) The resurrection of the dragon occurs *before* the general resurrection, viz., in A.D. 64 when the Neronean persecution began. The resurrection of the saints and martyrs did not occur until as late as A.D. 70. Christ consumed Nero with the brightness of his coming and breath of his mouth (II Thess. 2:8), but the way into the holiest was not manifest while the first temple was standing (Heb. 9:8) or the plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled. (Rev. 15:8) Hence, there was a short period between the persecution and the resurrection when the souls of the martyrs rested in hades. (Cf. Rev. 6:9-11) Since the different actors each received a different "resurrection" at different times there cannot be a single thousand-year period between them.

Third, there is the grammatical structure of the passage. The definite article ("the") is referential and assumes a prior familiarity with its subject. The Greek has no indefinite article ("a"); where the noun has no article the English language supplies it. Unlike the definite article, which is referential, the indefinite article introduces a *new* subject. Thus, when John first introduces the symbol of the dragon's binding he uses the indefinite article: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years." (Rev. 20:1, 2) Notice that the indefinite article "a" introduces for the first time the symbol of

a thousand years. Subsequent reference to this thousand years is always prefaced by the definite article "the." "And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till *the* thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season." (v. 3; *emphasis added.*) Here, the definite article assumes a prior familiarity with the thousand years. Its function is referential, it points back to the thousand years introduced in verse two. However, when John reaches verse four, we do not find the definite article, but the *indefinite* article. "And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the word of God...and they lived and reigned *a* thousand years." (*Emphasis added.*) The indefinite article here indicates that a *new* subject is under discussion, another thousand years. Had this been the same thousand years of the dragon's binding, John would have said "And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the word of God...and they lived and reigned *the* thousand years." However, by use of the indefinite article we may be certain another thousand-year period is introduced. Other examples of this pattern occur throughout Revelation. (Cf. Rev. 12:3, 4 with Rev. 13:11 – the great red dragon with "a dragon"; Rev. 8:10, 11 with Rev. 9:1 – the star nominated "wormwood" with a star nominated "Abaddon.")

Finally, another factor pointing to two millennia is John's use of the phrase "and I saw" (Gk. *kai eidon*) in Rev. 20:1, 4. Use of this phrase, or its literary equivalent "and I heard," typically points to a *new* vision and subject. Review of a few instances where these phrases occur will demonstrate the truth of this statement. (Cf. Rev. 14:1; 15:1; 16:1; 17:3; 18:1, 19:11; 20:1, 4, 11) Thus, when in verse four John states "And I saw thrones and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus," *etc.*, he *leaves* the binding of the dragon and introduces a new subject. This new subject includes *another* thousand years. As already noted, this is also shown by the indefinite article ("a") - "and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." "And I saw" points to a new vision and subject, the indefinite article points to another thousand years. Together, they show that the historical circumstances symbolized by the binding of the dragon are no longer in view. (For further argument why there are two millennia, see our book, *The Consummation of the Ages.*)

Thus, quite apart from the exegetical necessity of allowing the persecution under Nero to assume its place as the final contest the saints had to endure before the eschaton, there are other indicia pointing to two millennia, both grammatical and

exegetical. Together, they present an insurmountable case that two millennia are contemplated by the text.

### Conclusion

The single millennium model forces a futurist eschatology by creating a *second* final contest the saints were required to face before the eschaton. By wedding the reign of the martyrs to the binding of the dragon, Gog and Magog is forced from its historical place as the persecution under Nero and the beast and made to follow it instead. Only by divorcing the binding of the dragon from the reign of the saints and martyrs can the trap of futurism be avoided and Gog and Magog allowed to assume its proper place as the last conflict before the end. It is a question of either a single millennium, progression, and futurism, or two millennia, recapitulation, and Preterism. For Preterists the choice should be easy.

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*F.W. Farrar*

## The Early Days of Christianity

Book I

The World

Chapter I

**Moral Condition of the World**

*(Cont'd from our last newsletter; for full text of chapter, see our website)*

If there had been a refuge anywhere for the sentiments of outraged virtue and outraged humanity, we might have hoped to find it in the Senate, the members of which were heirs of so many noble and austere traditions. But – even in the days of Tiberius – the Senate, as Tacitus tells us, had rushed headlong into the most servile flattery,[38] and this would not have been possible if its members had not been tainted by the prevalent deterioration. It was before the once grace and pure-minded Senators of Rome – the greatness of whose state was founded on the sanctity of family relationships – that the Censor Metellus had declared in A.U.C. 602, without one dissentient murmur, that marriage could only be regarded as an intolerable necessity.[39] Before that same Senate, at an earlier period, a leading Consul had not scrupled to assert that there was scarcely one among them all who had not ordered one or more of

his own infant children to be exposed to death.[40] In the hearing of that same Senate in A.D. 59, not long before St. Paul wrote his letter to Philemon, C. Cassius Longinus had gravely argued that the only security for the life of masters was to put into execution the sanguinary Silanian Law, which enacted that, if a master was murdered, every one of his slaves, however numerous, however notoriously innocent, should be indiscriminately massacred.[41] It was the senators of Rome who thronged forth to meet with adoring congratulations the miserable youth who came to them with his hands reeking with the blood of matricide.[42] They offered thanksgivings to the gods for his worst cruelties,[43] and obediently voted Divine honours on the dead infant, four months old, of the wife whom he afterwards killed with a brutal kick[44].

And what was the religion of a period which needed the sanctions and consolations of religion more deeply than any age since the world began? It is certain that the old Paganism was – except in country places – practically dead. The very fact that it was necessary to prop it up by the buttress of political interference shows how hollow and ruinous the structure of classic Polytheism had become.[45] The decrees and reforms of Claudius were not likely to reassure the faith of an age which had witnessed in contemptuous silence, or with frantic adulation, the assumption by Gaius of the attributes of deity after deity, had tolerated his insults against their sublimest objects of worship, and encouraged his claim to a living apotheosis.[46] The upper classes were “destitute of faith, yet terrified at skepticism.” They had long learned to treat the current mythology as a mass of worthless fables, scarcely amusing enough for even a school-boy’s laughter,[47] but they were the ready dupes of every wandering quack who chose to assume the character of a *mathematicus* or a *mage*. [48] Their official religion was a decrepit Theogony; their real religion was a vague and credulous fatalism, which disbelieved in the existence of the gods, or held with Epicurus that that they were careless of mankind.[49] The mass of the populace either accorded to the old beliefs a nominal adherence which saved them the trouble of giving any thought to the matter,[50] and reduced their creed and their morals to a survival of national habits; or else they plunged with eager curiosity into the crowd of foreign cults[51] – among which a distorted Judaism took its place[52] – such as made the Romans familiar with strange names like Sabazius and Anchialus, Agdistis, Isis, and the Syrian goddess.[53] All men joined in the confession that “the oracles were dumb.” It hardly needed the wail of mingled lamentations as of departing deities which

swept over the astonished crew of the vessel of Palodes to assure the world that the reign of the gods of Hellas was over – that “Great Pan was dead.”[54]

Such are the scenes which we must witness, such are the sentiments with which we must become familiar, the moment that we turn away our eyes from the spectacle of the little Christian churches, composed chiefly as yet of salves and artisans, who had been taught to imitate a Divine example of humility and sincerity, of purity and love. There were, indeed, a few among the Heathen who lived nobler lives and professed a purer ideal than the Pagans around them. Here and there in the ranks of the philosophers a Demetrius, a Musonius Rufus, and Epictetus; here and there among Senators and Helvidius Priscus, a Paetus Thrasea, a Barea Soranus; here and there among literary men a Seneca or a Persius – showed that virtue was not yet extinct. But the Stoicism on which they learned for support amid the terrors and temptations of that awful epoch utterly failed to provide a remedy against the universal degradation. It aimed at cherishing an insensibility which gave no real comfort, and for which it offered no adequate motive. It aimed at repressing the passions by a violence so unnatural that with them it also crushed some of the gentlest and most elevating emotions. Its self-satisfaction and exclusiveness repelled the gentlest and sweetest natures from its communion. It made a vice of compassion, which Christianity inculcated as a virtue; it cherished a haughtiness which Christianity discouraged as a sin. It was unfit for the task of ameliorating mankind, because it looked on human nature in its normal aspects with contemptuous disgust. Its marked characteristic was a despairing sadness, which became specially prominent in its most sincere adherents. Its favourite theme was the glorification of suicide, which wiser moralists had severally reprobated,[55] but which many Stoics belauded as the one sure refuge against oppression and outrage.[56] It was a philosophy which was indeed able to lacerate the heart with a righteous indignation against the crimes and follies of mankind, but which vainly strove to resist, and which scarcely even hoped to stem, the ever-swelling tide of vice and misery. For wretchedness it had no pity; on vice it looked with impotent disdain. Thrasea was regarded as an antique hero for waking out of the Senate-house during the discussion of some decree which involved a servility more than usually revolting[57]. He gradually drove his few admirers to the conviction that, even for those who had every advantage of rank and wealth, nothing was possible but a life of crushing sorrow ended by a death of complete despair.[58] St. Paul and St. Peter, on the other hand,

were at the very same epoch teaching in the same city, to a few Jewish hucksters and a few Gentile slaves, a doctrine so full of hope and brightness that letters, written in a prison with torture and death in view, read like idylls of serene happiness and Paeans of triumphant joy. The graves of these poor sufferers, hid from the public eye in the catacombs, were decorated with an art, rude indeed, yet so triumphant as to make their subterranean squalor

radiant with emblems of all that is brightest and most poetic in the happiness of man. [59] While the glimmering taper of the Stoics was burning pale, as though amid the vapours of a charnel-house, the torch of Life upheld by the hands of the Tarsian tent-maker and the Galilaeen fisherman had flashed from Damascus to Antioch, from Antioch to Athens, from Athens to Corinth, from Corinth to Ephesus, from Ephesus to Rome. (For Notes, please see our web site)

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## The Wickedness that is our Federal Judiciary Must be Stopped!

The U.S. Federal Appellate and Supreme Courts *hate* God and are intent on making America an atheist, socialist republic by banishing all mention of God from the public sector. When a nation will not acknowledge God, the right to worship him can not long endure. As the following compilation shows, all fifty states acknowledge God. Judge Roy Moore was right! America's founders did not intend for there to be a separation of God and state, as shown by the fact that all 50 states acknowledge God in their state constitutions:

**Alabama 1901, Preamble.** We the people of the State of Alabama, invoking the favor and guidance of Almighty God, do ordain and establish the following Constitution ...

**Alaska 1956, Preamble.** We, the people of Alaska, grateful to God and to those who founded our nation and pioneered this great land ...

**Arizona 1911, Preamble.** We, the people of the State of Arizona, grateful to Almighty God for our liberties, do ordain this Constitution...

**Arkansas 1874, Preamble.** We, the people of the State of Arkansas, grateful to Almighty God for the privilege of choosing our own form of government...

**California 1879, Preamble.** We, the People of the State of California, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom ...

**Colorado 1876, Preamble.** We, the people of Colorado, with profound reverence for the Supreme Ruler of Universe.

**Connecticut 1818, Preamble.** The People of Connecticut, acknowledging with gratitude the good Providence of God in permitting them to enjoy .

**Delaware 1897, Preamble.** Through Divine Goodness all men have, by nature, the rights of worshipping and serving their Creator according to the dictates of their consciences ...

**Florida 1885, Preamble.** We, the people of the State of Florida, grateful to Almighty God for our constitutional liberty . establish this Constitution...

**Georgia 1777, Preamble.** We, the people of Georgia, relying upon protection and guidance of Almighty God, do ordain and establish this Constitution...

**Hawaii 1959, Preamble.** We, the people of Hawaii, Grateful for Divine Guidance ... establish this Constitution.

**Idaho 1889, Preamble.** We, the people of the State of Idaho, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom, to secure its blessings ...

**Illinois 1870, Preamble.** We, the people of the State of Illinois, grateful to Almighty God for the civil, political and religious liberty which He hath so long permitted us to enjoy and looking to Him for a blessing on our endeavors.

**Indiana 1851, Preamble.** We, the People of the State of Indiana, grateful to Almighty God for the free exercise of the right to chose our form of government.

**Iowa 1857, Preamble.** We, the People of the State of Iowa, grateful to the Supreme Being for the blessings hitherto enjoyed, and feeling our dependence on Him for a continuation of these blessings . establish this Constitution

**Kansas 1859, Preamble.** We, the people of Kansas, grateful to Almighty God for our civil and religious privileges . establish this Constitution.

**Kentucky 1891, Preamble.** We, the people of the Commonwealth of grateful to Almighty God for the civil, political and religious liberties...

**Louisiana 1921, Preamble.** We, the people of the State of Louisiana, grateful to Almighty God for the civil, political and religious liberties we enjoy.

**Maine 1820, Preamble.** We the People of Maine .. acknowledging with grateful hearts the goodness of the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe in affording us an opportunity ... and imploring His aid and direction.

**Maryland 1776, Preamble.** We, the people of the state of Maryland, grateful to Almighty God or our civil and religious liberty...

**Massachusetts 1780, Preamble.** We...the people of Massachusetts, acknowledging with grateful hearts, the goodness of the Great Legislator of the Universe ... in the course of His Providence, an opportunity ..and devoutly imploring His direction ...

**Michigan 1908, Preamble.** We, the people of the State of Michigan, grateful to Almighty God for the blessings of freedom ... establish this Constitution

**Minnesota 1857, Preamble.** We, the people of the State of Minnesota, grateful to God for our civil and religious liberty, and desiring to perpetuate its blessings.

**Mississippi 1890, Preamble.** We, the people of Mississippi in convention assembled, grateful to Almighty God, and invoking His blessing on our work.

**Missouri 1845, Preamble.** We, the people of Missouri, with profound reverence for the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, and grateful for His goodness .. establish this Constitution ...

**Montana 1889, Preamble.** We, the people of Montana, grateful to Almighty God for the blessings of liberty. establish this Constitution ...

**Nebraska 1875, Preamble.** We, the people, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom .. establish this Constitution .

**Nevada 1864, Preamble.** We the people of the State of Nevada, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom establish this Constitution...

**New Hampshire 1792, Part I. Art. I. Sec. V.** Every individual has a natural and unalienable right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience.

**New Jersey 1844, Preamble.** We, the people of the State of New Jersey, grateful to Almighty God for civil and religious liberty which He hath so long permitted us to enjoy, and looking to Him for a blessing on our endeavors ..

**New Mexico 1911, Preamble.** We, the People of New Mexico, grateful to Almighty God for the blessings of liberty ..

**New York 1846, Preamble.** We, the people of the State of New York, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom, in order to secure its blessings.

**North Carolina 1868, Preamble.** We the people of the State of North Carolina, grateful to Almighty God, the Sovereign Ruler of Nations, for our civil, political, and religious liberties, and acknowledging our dependence upon Him for the continuance of those ..

**North Dakota 1889, Preamble.** We, the people of North Dakota, grateful to Almighty God for the blessings of civil and religious liberty, do ordain...

**Ohio 1852, Preamble.** We the people of the state of Ohio, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom, to secure its blessings and to promote our common ...

**Oklahoma 1907, Preamble.** Invoking the guidance of Almighty God, in order to secure and perpetuate the blessings of liberty ... establish this ...

**Oregon 1857, Bill of Rights, Article I. Section 2.** All men shall be secure in the Natural right, to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their consciences..

**Pennsylvania 1776, Preamble.** We, the people of Pennsylvania, grateful to Almighty God for the blessings of civil and religious liberty, and humbly invoking His guidance.

**Rhode Island 1842, Preamble.** We the People of the State of Rhode Island grateful to Almighty God for the civil and religious liberty which He hath so long permitted us to enjoy, and looking to Him for a blessing.

**South Carolina, 1778, Preamble.** We, the people of he State of South Carolina, grateful to God for our liberties, do ordain and establish this Constitution.

**South Dakota 1889, Preamble.** We, the people of South Dakota, grateful to Almighty God for our civil! and religious liberties .. establish this Constitution.

**Tennessee 1796, Art. XI.III.** That all men have a natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their conscience...

**Texas 1845, Preamble.** We the People of the Republic of Texas, acknowledging, with gratitude, the grace and beneficence of God.

**Utah 1896, Preamble.** Grateful to Almighty God for life and liberty, we establish this Constitution ..

**Vermont 1777, Preamble.** Whereas all government ought to ... enable the individuals who compose it to enjoy their natural rights, and other blessings which the Author of Existence has bestowed on man...

**Virginia 1776, Bill of Rights, XVI ...** Religion, or the Duty which we owe our Creator ... can be directed only by Reason ... and that it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian Forbearance, Love and Charity towards each other ...

**Washington 1889, Preamble.** We the People of the State of Washington, grateful! to the Supreme Ruler

of the Universe for our liberties, do ordain this Constitution ...

**West Virginia 1872, Preamble.** Since through Divine Providence we enjoy the blessings of civil, political and religious liberty, we, the people of West Virginia .. reaffirm our faith in and constant reliance upon God...

**Wisconsin 1848, Preamble.** We, the people of Wisconsin, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom, domestic tranquility ...

**Wyoming 1890, Preamble.** We, the people of the State of Wyoming, grateful to God for our civil, political, and religious liberties . establish this Constitution...

After reviewing acknowledgments of God from all 50 state constitutions, one is faced with the prospect that maybe, just maybe, the ACLU and the out-of-control federal courts are wrong!

"Those people who will not be governed by God will be ruled by tyrants." William Penn

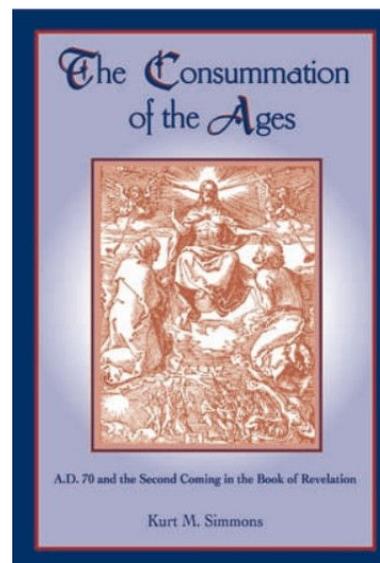
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# WHY DID AMERICA WIN THE WAR?

*Don Preston*

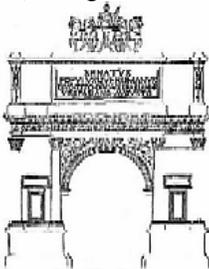
On Tuesday, April 22, on MSNBC, Joe Scarborough, on the program *A Scarborough Country*, interviewed Jerry Falwell. In that interview Falwell stated that the reason America won the war in Iraq is because America is the ally of Israel. Since Israel is God's chosen people, Falwell argued, those who bless Israel today are blessed. He went on to argue that America must, at all costs, continue to support Israel, or America will stop being blessed by God.

On program after program, the televangelists such as Jack Van Impe, John Hagee, Hal Lindsay, etc. continue to proclaim that Israel is God's chosen people, and that America must continue to support her, no matter what. The truth of the matter is that the people calling themselves Israel today, *are not the Israel of the Bible!* Consider the doctrine of circumcision.

Circumcision was the sign of God's covenant with Abraham. Without it, a person was not considered part of the people. The failure or refusal to be circumcised would result in being cut off from the people which meant at the least banishment, and at the worst, death (Genesis 17:12f). No circumcision, no identity as the chosen people.

If you were not circumcised, you had no right to the land. Israel could not even enter her inheritance, in the time of the conquest, because the men were uncircumcised (Joshua 5). Thus, no circumcision, no land promise!

If you were not circumcised, you could not enter the Temple at Jerusalem. At the Temple signs warned all Gentiles that entrance beyond a certain point would result in death. When the Jews thought Paul had taken an uncircumcised man, Trophimus, beyond that point, they tried to kill Paul. Thus, no circumcision, no right to worship God.



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Clearly, circumcision delineated Israel from the other nations. It designated them as Abraham's seed, and thus, God's chosen people. The question is, how does God view circumcision today?

Paul said, "Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything," "This I say, that if any man is circumcised, he is a debtor to keep the whole law," "If any man is circumcised, Christ shall profit him nothing," "If any of you seek to be justified by the law of circumcision, you are fallen from grace." (Galatians 5). Now it must be remembered that no one preached the "hope of Israel" more than Paul (Acts 28:16f), yet the apostle had come to know that the physical things of Abraham had now been fulfilled in the spiritual body of Christ, and the physical things had now passed. The shadow had given way to the body!

In spite of this, we are told that Israel remains God's chosen people and that circumcision will be restored in the millennium, along with the Jew and Gentile distinction inherent in circumcision, the Temple, etc.. If that is true, *what happens to the gospel?* The gospel says physical circumcision is no longer valid or meaningful. Of course, *spiritual circumcision of the heart is demanded* (Colossians 2:11-13). So, we ask again, what happens to the blood-bought gospel of Jesus if circumcision is restored. Jesus said his gospel *will never pass away* (Matthew 24:35). If the gospel will never pass, and if the gospel says circumcision is invalid, then Israel is no longer the chosen people of God.

In my book, *Israel, 1948: Countdown to Nowhere*, I discuss the issue of circumcision and how important it is to the modern issue of Israel and the identity of God's people. You can have a free copy of that book. Just drop me a line!