

The Sword & The Plow

Newsletter of the Bimillennial Preterist Association

Vol. XVI, No.10 – October 2013

With What Body Do They Come? A Look at the Resurrection

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Preterists believe the general Resurrection occurred in AD 70, in connection with Christ's kingdom coming in power against the Romans and Jews to put His enemies beneath His feet (Dan 12:2; Matt 16:27, 28; John 5:28m 29; Heb 10:13). This corresponded with the destruction of Hadean death, which was the *last enemy* (1 Cor 15:26, 55; Isa 25:8). Although all Preterists agree the eschatological resurrection occurred in AD 70, there is disagreement about the *type of body* received in the resurrection. Three views exist: 1) individual, *physical* bodies; 2) individual, *spiritual* (immaterial) bodies; and 3) a collective, mystical, *covenantal* body.

In this article, we will argue that the individual, spiritual body view is the only scripturally defensible view.

The Intermediate State of the Dead

No discussion of the Resurrection would be complete without touching upon the intermediate place and state of the dead. Indeed, raising the dead from the realm of the deceased unto their respective eternal rewards and punishments is the very essence of the eschatological Resurrection.

Scripture teaches that the “wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23). God warned our first ancestors that death would ensue the day they ate of the forbidden fruit.

“But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” (Gen 2:17)

However, God was merciful to the couple and instituted a law of substitutes, which allowed the blood of another to take their place and atone for their sin. An animal was sacrificed instead, and the couple clothed with its skin (Gen 3:21). But the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sins (Heb 10:4). Animal sacrifice was therefore merely provisional, standing as a prophetic type pointing to the sacrifice of Christ. Since the blood of animals could not take away sins, the saints could not enter heaven until the death of Jesus and the general resurrection. Hence, the spirits of the departed dead were “gathered unto their people” in *Sheol* (Hebrew) or *Hades* (Greek) (Gen 25:8, 17; 35:29; 49:29, 33).

The picture of *Sheol* in the Old Testament is somewhat murky, but the dead are portrayed as living and conscious (Isa 14:9, 10; cf. 1 Sam 28:15-20). The picture is more complete in the New Testament, where the term *Hades* is used instead. Hades had two divisions: a place of torment for the lost, and a place of comfort for the saved. The place of the lost was called *Tartarus* (2 Pet 2:4); the place of the saved was called *Abraham’s bosom*, or, more commonly, *Paradise* (Luke 24:43; 2Cor 12:4). A picture of the state of the dead pending the general resurrection occurs in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus as well as several passages in Revelation (Luke 16:19-31; cf. Rev 6:9-11; 14:13; 20:4). On the last day of the pre-messianic age, Christ, seated upon the throne of His glory, began the judgment of the quick and the dead (Matt 25:31-46; 2 Tim 4:1). Death surrendered up its dead: the just inherited eternal life in heaven; the unjust suffered eternal destruction in *Gehenna*.

Gehenna (ge-enna) is Greek for the Valley of Hinnom outside of Jerusalem (also called Tophet, Isa 30:33). The Valley of Hinnom is where 185,000 Assyrians smitten by the angel of the LORD were buried and cremated (Isa 30:31-33; 37:36). During periods of idolatry, it was also used by the children of Israel to sacrifice their children to Molech (2 Chron 28:3; 33:6; Jer 7:31); Josiah later defiled the place so that it might never again be used for that purpose (2 Kings 23:10). In the time of Christ, the Valley of Hinnom served as the city dump for Jerusalem. It

is there that the bodies of over 600,000 Jews who starved to death in the Roman siege of Jerusalem were cast. The phrase “*where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched*” takes its source from here (Isa 66:24; Mark 9:44, 46, 48), and refers to the maggots and endless fires that fed upon the dead. The imagery is applied by extension to the eternal fate of the lost in the next world (Matt 5:22; 18:8, 9; James 3:6). In Revelation, Christ’s enemies—the beast, the kings of the earth, the false prophet, and the dragon—are cast directly into Gehenna upon their defeat (there called the *lake of fire*), indicating that the judgment of the quick and the dead was then underway (Rev 19:20; 20:10; 2 Tim 4:1). This should be compared to the Old Testament, where upon defeat God’s enemies were cast into the “pit,” or *Sheol* (Ezek 31:14-17). John portrays the judgment and eschatological Resurrection:

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hades delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” (Rev 20:11-15)

The “sea” in Revelation is associated with the Gentiles (the four Gentile world powers in Daniel’s seventh chapter rise from the Great Sea; the Roman “beast,” whose number is 666, also rises from the sea). The sea, or *deep*, is also associated with Hades (Luke 8:31; Rom 10:7). Therefore, the sea in this passage probably refers to Tartarus and those outside of covenant relationship with God. However, questions of this sort aside, we see that the very essence of the eschatological Resurrection involved Hades and raising the dead unto their respective rewards. Paul summed it all up in his chapter on the Resurrection when he said “*O death, where is thy sting? O Hades, where is thy victory?*” (1 Cor 15:55). With the destruction of Hades (that is, Hadean death), the saints now go directly to

heaven upon physical death (*cf.* Rev 14:13), the unsaved go to Gehenna.

With this overview of Hades and the Resurrection behind us, we are prepared to discuss the type of body received.

The Corporate Body View

We find traces of the Corporate Body View (CBV) doctrine expressed as early as 1845, when Robert Townley wrote his book *The Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ a Past Event* (London, 1845).¹ A modern proponent of this view is Max King, who made it popular during the 1970-80s. At one time, the majority of Preterists likely embraced the CBV, but numbers have dramatically declined in recent years. Both Townley and King were led into Universalism by this view, which has brought it under increased scrutiny and criticism, causing many to seek alternatives.

Briefly stated, the CBV interprets the Resurrection mystically. Where the rest of Christendom teaches that the “natural body” refers to man’s physical body and the “spiritual body” refers to the incorruptible body received in the Resurrection, the CBV holds that the natural and spiritual bodies refer instead to Judaism and Christianity, respectively. According to King:

“Resurrection has reference many times to the change from the Jewish system to the Christian system, where the material body of Judaism is

put off in death and the spiritual body of Christianity is resurrected in life.”²

“The natural body that was sown . . . answers to the fleshly or carnal system of Judaism . . . out of the decay of Judaism arose the spiritual body of Christianity . . . this is the primary meaning of Paul’s statement, “it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body. There is a spiritual body.”³

The CBV holds that the Old Testament law was valid and held Christians in bondage to sin until AD 70. Justification from sin (the Christian’s “resurrection”) would come only with the destruction of Jerusalem. According to King:

“Judaism was the metaphorical grave of the spiritual dead out of which the resurrection took place.”⁴

“One must look to the Jewish system as the state and power of death to be destroyed by the reign of Christ.”⁵

“Paul wanted to attain unto the resurrection of the dead . . . as represented in the Jewish system”⁶.

“The last enemy to be destroyed was death (1 Cor 15:26), and Israel was that ministration of death (2 Cor 3:7)”⁷.

“Paul said it was then that “death was swallowed up in victory” . . . But how was death swallowed up in victory? The answer is obvious. Where was death resident? Did it not reign in the mortal or natural body of Judaism . . . But when that body died, and from it arose a

¹ *“The mystical body of Christ, say we, was a natural body, at that time, as far as its ordinances, its officers, its gifts, prophesying, tongues, healing, helps, and governments were concerned. All these were, if the expression may be allowed, borrowed from the Jewish body of worship...That body was to give way to a spiritual body...the old covenant administration of death, which in Paul’s day was shaken and ready to vanish, should entirely disappear – then should be brought to pass the saying that was written, “Death is swallowed up in victory.” Robert Townley, The Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ a Past Event (London, 1845), 120*

² Max R. King, *The Spirit of Prophecy* (1971, Warren, OH), 191

³ Ibid, 200

⁴ Ibid, 220

⁵ Ibid, 144

⁶ Ibid, 194

⁷ Ibid, 173

spiritual body clothed with incorruption and immortality, death was defeated".⁸

Reduced to its essential elements, the CBV rests upon three pillars, each of which we believe to be objectively false. These are:

- 1) The Old Testament law was valid, binding, and obligatory until AD 70;
- 2) Atonement was incomplete and the saints remained under the debt of sin until AD 70; and
- 3) Grace and justification from sin arrived only in AD 70 at the fall of Jerusalem.

These are logical corollaries of each other. If one is shown to be wrong, the others will be wrong as well. For example, if it is shown that the Old Testament legally terminated at the cross, then grace and justification will have arrived at the cross, and so forth. So, what does Scripture say? When did the old law end and the gospel of grace begin? Here there can be no doubt: The Old Testament ended at Calvary.

Just before His crucifixion, Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, saying, "*This is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many the remission of sins*" (Matt 26:28). Jesus' blood inaugurated the New Testament (*cf.* Heb 9:20). It is a fundamental maxim of law that there can be only one will or testament in force at a time. The last or latest will revokes all earlier ones. The epistle to the Hebrews says "a testament is of force after men are dead" (Heb 9:17; *cf.* Heb 10:9). Therefore, the New Testament came into effect upon Jesus' death. Since there cannot be two Testaments in force at one time, the Old Testament necessarily ended at the cross.

At Jesus' death, the veil of the temple, representing our separation from God, was "rent in twain," showing that the way into God's presence was now open through the death of Christ (Matt 27:51). The temple service and blood sacrifices were a prophetic foreshadow of good things to come (Col 2:17; Heb 10:1). A shadow ends where the body begins. Paul says the body (substance) of our faith is the cross of Christ (Col 2:17; 1 Cor 2:2; Gal 6:14). Therefore, the shadow of the law ended at the cross. Paul states that Christ "*abolished in his*

flesh . . . the law of commandments contained in ordinances" (Eph 2:15). The verb here is in the perfect tense, showing completed action in the past: Christ abolished the law in His flesh (viz., at the cross).

"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.(Col 2:13, 14)

Again, the perfect tense ("having forgiven") is used. If the apostle wanted to say that the Mosaic Law was abolished and Christians had forgiveness of sins, what words could he use to make it clearer than those recorded here? Notice also that Paul says the saints were already "quickened" and had experienced spiritual resurrection at conversion (faith, repentance, and baptism) (*cf.* Eph 2:1, 6; Rom. 6:3-6). Thus, the CBV's insistence that the saints were dead in sin until AD 70 is wide of the mark.

Two entire epistles (Galatians and Hebrews) are devoted to the proposition that the law was no longer valid and need not be kept. A special counsel held in Jerusalem by the apostles concluded there was no need to keep the ceremonial law (Acts 15:24-29). We thus read that the dietary laws and law against Jews keeping table fellowship with Gentiles were revoked (Acts 10; Gal 2:11, 12; 1 Tim 4:4); the law segregating Gentiles from Jews in the temple was revoked (Eph 2:14, 15); the feast days and Sabbath days were revoked (Gal 4:10; Col 2:16); and circumcision, the very epitome of the Old Testament law, was revoked (Gal 2:2-5; 6:15). If all these are revoked, what part of the law does the CBV argue was still valid after the crucifixion of Jesus, keeping the saints under the debt of sin?

The epistle to the Romans states, "*Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace*" (Rom 6:14; *cf.* Gal 5:2). Not under the law. How can proponents of the CBV deny simple and direct statements like these and maintain credibility? At His ascension Christ became our high priest (Heb 9:11, 24). The epistle to the Hebrews says "*for the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law*" (Heb 7:12). A change of the law! Christ's sacrifice and

⁸ Ibid, 202

priesthood revoked the Aaronic priesthood and temple sacrifices. As for atonement being already complete, we have Paul's testimony, saying, "*We have now received the atonement*" (Rom 5:11). As well, the author of Hebrews declares, "*For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified*" (Heb 10:14; perfect tense, showing completed action in the past).

Thus, all three essential tenants of the CBV are directly contradicted by numerous passages of Scripture: The law was revoked at the cross, atonement was complete, grace had entered, and men were justified in spiritual resurrection—all before AD 70. Arguments that there was a collective body resurrection of the saints out of the grave of Judaism in AD 70 must therefore be dismissed.

The Individual, Physical Body View

The idea that the Resurrection involves physical bodies has a long tradition in the church. The Nicene Creed (AD 325) speaks merely of the "resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come," but many later creeds speak of the resurrection of "the body," and several creeds and confessions speak expressly of the resurrection of "the flesh."⁹ This seems to have come about in opposition to Origenism.

Origen (184 – 254) was the greatest of the early Christian writers. Jerome says that he wrote more than any individual could read. Epiphanius related that his works amounted to 6,000 writings. His magnum opus was the Hexapala, a

⁹ The Interrogatory Creed of Hippolytus (c. 215 A.D.) asks, "Do you believe...in the resurrection of the body?" Similarly, the Creed of Marcellus (340 A.D.) as well as the Apostles' Creed (390 A.D.) and the Athanasian Creed (450-670 A.D.) declare "I believe in...the resurrection of the body." The Creed of Rufinus (c. 404 A.D.) is more explicit and declares "I believe in the resurrection of the *flesh*." The Westminster Confession (1646) (Reformed) and the second London Confession (1689) (Baptist), declare: "At the last day, such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed: and all the dead shall be raised up, with the selfsame bodies, and none other (although with different qualities), which shall be united again to their souls forever."

critical edition of the Greek and Hebrew scriptures set in six columns, including versions of the 1) Hebrew, 2) Hebrew transliterated into Greek, 3) Aquila of Sinope, 4) Symmachus the Ebionite, 5) a recension of the Septuagint, 6) Theodotion. Eusebius devoted almost the entire sixth book of his "Ecclesiastical History" to Origen and, in collaboration with the martyr Pamphilus, composed the "Apology for Origen." His works published in the Ante-Nicene Fathers include *De Principiis*, *A Letter to Africanus* about the History of Susanna, *A Letter to Gregory*, and *Contra Celsus*.

Origen, who was also a Preterist, believed that in the resurrection the body would be changed from one that is animal, made of earth and soil, into one that is spiritual and ethereal: "What at first was flesh (formed) out of earthly soil, and was afterwards dissolved by death, and again reduced to dust and ashes will...advance to the glory of a spiritual body..." "With respect to the state of the body, we are to hold that his very body which now, on account of its service to the soul, is styled an animal body, will...attain to a spiritual condition and quality."¹⁰

After Origen's death, opposition grew against his doctrine of the resurrection, first by Methodius (circa 300 A.D.), then Epiphanius (375 A.D.), then Jerome in his anti-Origenist quarrel with Rufinus (c. 393–402). In the sixth century, Justinian issued an edict denouncing Origen (543 A.D.), and, finally, the fifth ecumenical council at Constantinople anathematized him (553 A.D.). The doctrine of the resurrection of physical bodies has been firmly planted in the church ever since, with almost no scriptural warrant whatever.

Jesus' Teaching about the Resurrection

The resurrection of individual, physical bodies was the view of the Pharisees in Jesus' day. We learn this from the hypothetical scenario propounded by the Sadducees to Jesus, asking whose wife the widow of seven husbands would

¹⁰ Origen, *De Pincipiis*, 3.6.5,6, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 4, p. 346, 347

be in the Resurrection. The Sadducees did not believe in the Resurrection (Matt 22:23; Acts 23:8), whereas the Pharisees did. Thus, it is clear that the Sadducees' question was based upon the Pharisees' conception of the Resurrection, and was put to Jesus as an indissoluble problem refuting the Resurrection. Jesus' response affirmed the fact of the Resurrection, but denied that it was physical in nature.

"Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." (Matt 29:32)

Three points emerge from this:

- 1) The resurrection is in heaven, not on earth (*cf.* Matt 5:10, 12; Heb 11:13-16). The body received, therefore, must be suited to the spiritual realm above, not the material realm here below.
- 2) Angels by definition are spirits—immaterial, intangible, and invisible. Since in the Resurrection we will be like the angels, it follows that we, too, will be spirits whose bodies are immaterial, intangible, and invisible.
- 3) Abraham and the patriarchs had in some form or manner already experienced a resurrection (*viz.*, the first resurrection of the soul or spirit in Hades, Rev 6:9-11; 14:13; 20:4). But if the first resurrection involved the spirit of man, what basis is there to assume the Hadean resurrection would involve physical bodies? So far as we can tell, there is none.

Paul's Analogy of the Seed

We may add to Jesus' instruction about the Resurrection the words of Paul:

"That which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body . . . So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. And so

it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. . . . flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor 15:37-50)

It is commonly supposed that the "seed" in Paul's analogy is the dead body buried in the earth, but this is mistaken. That which is sown is the human soul, encased in the "seed hull" of earthly form. This is what Paul means when he says "*It is sown a natural body . . . And so it was written, The first man Adam was made a living soul.*" These parallels make clear that our souls are first "sown" in flesh via human birth. But that which is sown is not quickened (resurrected) unless it die (1 Cor 15:36). That is, we must put off these mortal bodies in physical death, if we are to be raised to heavenly life (absent from the body is present with the Lord; cf. 2 Cor 5:6-8). The seed of our human nature bears the germ (the spirit) that comes forth at death clothed upon with a body suited to heavenly life. Hence, Jesus' physical resurrection is not the pattern of our own. Rather, Jesus' glorified body in heaven is the pattern of our resurrection. This is clear from Paul's statement "*the last Adam was made a quickening spirit . . . And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly*" (1 Cor 15:45, 49). God is a spirit (John 4:24). Our destiny is to become spirits with bodies suited for glory like Christ's (Rom 8:29, 30).

Verses Relied Upon by the PBV

Let us survey briefly the verses relied upon by adherents of the PBV.

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." (Job 19:25, 26)

This is the only verse in the Bible that makes reference to the flesh in apparent connection with the Resurrection. However, the Hebrew of this verse is so obscure and ambiguous that scholars cannot decide how it is to be translated. The marginal reading gives the rendering, "*After I shall awake, though this body be destroyed, yet out of my flesh . . .*" etc. In other words, two renderings, exactly opposite in meaning, can be sustained by the original tongue. Thus, it cannot be determined with certainty what Job actually meant. Given that this is the only place in Scripture referring to the flesh in the context of the Resurrection, we would be well advised to opt for the alternate rendering. At the very least,

standing as it does alone, and more especially in view of the poetic nature of the book, no essential doctrine of Scripture ought to be built upon it.

Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. (Isa 26:19)

This passage does not teach a general physical resurrection of believers. Jesus' "dead body" is the only body expressly mentioned in the passage. Those that "dwell in dust" refer to the spirits of the dead in Sheol/Hades, which was conceived as a cavernous realm beneath earth's surface. The earth casting out its dead therefore does not speak to the bodies of the dead, but rather their spirits in Hades. Assuming, however, that physical bodies are intended, the better view is that the reference is to certain physical resurrections, recorded by Matthew (27:52-53), in which actual bodies rose in association with Jesus' resurrection, and not to the general Resurrection of the last day predicted to occur some forty years later.

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John 5:28-29)

As with Isaiah 26:19, no physical bodies are mentioned in this text. All Jesus says is that those in the graves will come forth. Jesus did not say they would come forth on this side of eternity. Daniel made the like statement, saying, "*many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt*" (Dan 12:2). This language is obviously poetic: The dead do not "sleep" in the earth; their spirits go to Hades (Luke 24:43; cf. 16:19-31). Hence, the idea of "waking" from the dust is merely accommodative; it points to a coming day of salvation when death would be vanquished and man goes to his long-awaited home with God and Christ in heaven.

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. (Rom 8:11)

"Quickening" our mortal bodies does not refer to the resurrection of the physical body, but the

regenerative effects of God's Spirit in man by the mortification of the flesh. "*For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live*" (Rom 8:13; cf. Gal 5:24). This is all the more apparent from the verse immediately preceding, where Paul writes, "*the body is dead because of sin*" (Rom 8:10). The saints at Rome were not dead and neither were their bodies; the apostle is merely using a figure of speech. As the source of fleshly lusts, the body is spiritually "dead." But by being brought into subjection to the Spirit, the body is figuratively quickened and made an instrument of righteousness.

"And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." (Rom 8:23)

This passage may be likened to Jeremiah's purchase (redemption) of his uncle's field just before the nation went into captivity. The ownership of the land was witnessed and sealed unto Jeremiah, but its possession and enjoyment were postponed until the nation returned out of captivity (Jer 32:10-44). In the same way, our inheritance has been purchased for us by Christ, and we have the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts, whereby we cry "*Abba, Father,*" showing that we are putative heirs of eternal life (Rom 8:15-17). The "redemption of our body" is the point at which we come into possession of eternal life and receive our immortal bodies. There is no mention of physical bodies in the passage.

The Individual, Spiritual Body View

The phrase Individual Body View (IBV) was coined to distinguish it from the CBV, rather than as a stand-alone name to describe the eschatological Resurrection. It is suitable for the one-by-one resurrection experienced as men die today, but it is not really suitable for the eschatological Resurrection. The essence of the eschatological Resurrection was Hades surrendering up the spirits of the dead, beginning with Abel until the last day of the pre-messianic age. Therefore, I prefer the phrases *Hadean Resurrection* or *the resurrection from Hades* as more descript. Since we have already surveyed the Hadean Resurrection, let us look at a few verses demonstrating the nature of the resurrection body itself.

“Deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” (1 Cor 5:5)

“Destruction” of the flesh here is best understood in terms of its mortification by denying its affections and lusts. By excommunicating unrepentant members overtaken in sin, they may be brought to shame and repentance, leading to the denial and destruction of the flesh. By thus “crucifying the flesh” (Gal 5:24), the spirit is restored to purity, suitable unto salvation. The flesh is expressly excluded from the spirit’s salvation.

“For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” (2 Cor 4:16-18)

The material is visible and temporal; the immaterial is invisible and eternal. Although the outward and material man perishes, the inward, immaterial man is renewed day by day. The body will perish, but the spirit will inherit eternal life.

“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” (2 Cor 5:1)

Our “earthly house” refers to our mortal bodies of flesh; “this tabernacle” also refers to our physical bodies (2 Pet 1:14). Dissolution of our earthly house speaks to putting off the body in death. The “*building of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*” speaks to our immortal, immaterial, and spiritual bodies. These are received and enjoyed in heaven.

“For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.” (2 Cor 5:2, 3)

In the Resurrection, we are clothed with our immaterial and immortal house from heaven, not our fleshly, mortal bodies of earth. “Naked” speaks to putting off the body of flesh in death; “clothed” speaks to putting on the spiritual body in the resurrection of life.

“Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are

absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.” (2 Cor 5:6-8)

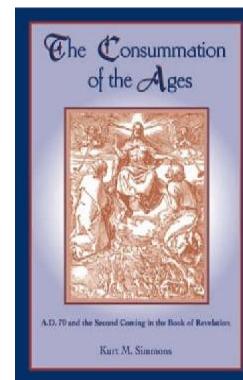
Could the apostle have made it plainer? We would be absent from the body of flesh that we might be at home with the Lord. If, in the Resurrection we are reunited with the body, we will be at home in the body and absent from the Lord! Clearly, that is no part of the Christian’s hope.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” (2 Cor 5:10)

This verse, following hard upon the heels of those going before, which so clearly proclaim that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, makes clear that in the Judgment men will not be clothed with houses of clay. That they are to receive the things done while in the body clearly implies that at the Judgment they would be in the physical body no more. They have passed from this life and put off their bodies of clay and gone to be judged for the things done while still in the flesh.

Conclusion

The eschatological Resurrection of the last day consisted in the spirits in Hades receiving individual, spiritual, immaterial, immortal, and invisible bodies suited to the ethereal realm above. Other views are unsound, and should be rejected.



The Consummation of the Ages A.D. 70 and the Second Coming in the Book of Revelation - 468 pages, Hardcover \$24.95

The Man Who Fired The Shot Heard 'Round The World

By Chuck Baldwin

In II Samuel 19 there is the story about an often-overlooked man by the name of Barzillai. He was a Gileadite who helped save King David's life. The Scripture says of him: "He was a very great man." Today, I'm going to tell you about a very great man. In fact, I'm going to talk about several great men.

I am reminded of these men, because tomorrow I have the distinct honor of speaking at a giant freedom rally on Lexington Green, Massachusetts, on the occasion of the 238th anniversary of the famous Battle of Lexington and Concord. If you live within driving distance, please come and join us. Oath Keepers founder, Stewart Rhodes, will also be speaking at this event. I believe the rally begins at 2pm local time.

In truth, April 19, 1775, should be regarded as important a date to Americans as July 4, 1776. It's a shame that we don't celebrate it as enthusiastically as we do Independence Day. It's even more shameful that many Americans don't even remember what happened on this day back in 1775. For the record, historians call this day, "Patriot's Day." More specifically, it was the day that the shot heard 'round the world was fired. It was the day America's War for Independence began.

Being warned of approaching British troops by Dr. Joseph Warren and Paul Revere, Pastor Jonas Clark and his male congregants of the Church of Lexington (numbering 60-70) were the ones that stood with their muskets in front of the Crown's troops (numbering over 800), who were on orders to seize a cache of arms which were stored at Concord and arrest Sam Adams and John Hancock (who were known to be in the area, and who had actually taken refuge in Pastor Clark's home).

According to eyewitnesses, the king's troops opened fire on the militiamen without warning, immediately killing eight of Pastor Clark's parishioners. In self defense, the Minutemen returned fire. These were the first shots of the Revolutionary War. This took place on Lexington Green, which was located directly

beside the church-house where those men worshipped each Sunday. Adams and Hancock were not apprehended. A few of Pastor Clark's men led them to safety as their Christian brothers were preparing to stand in front of the British troops. Sam Adams and John Hancock owed their lives to Pastor Clark and his brave Minutemen.

According to Pastor Clark, these are the names of the eight men who died on Lexington Green as the sun rose on April 19, 1775: Robert Munroe, Jonas Parker, Samuel Hadley, Jonathan Harrington, Jr., Isaac Muzzy, Caleb Harrington, and John Brown, all of Lexington, and one Mr. Porter of Woburn.

However, by the time the British troops arrived at the Concord Bridge, hundreds of colonists had amassed a defense of the bridge. A horrific battle took place, and the British troops were routed and soon retreated back to Boston. America's War for Independence had begun!

Yes, ladies and gentlemen, these two elements of American history are lost to the vast majority of historians today: 1) it was the attempted gun confiscation and seizure of two patriot leaders by British troops that ignited America's War for Independence; and, 2) it was a local church pastor and his male congregants that mostly comprised the Minutemen who fired the shots that started our great Revolution.

With that thought in mind, I want to devote today's column to honoring the brave preachers of Colonial America—these "children of the Pilgrims," as one colonial pastor's descendant put it.

It really wasn't that long ago. However, with the way America's clergymen act today, one would think that preachers such as James Caldwell, John Peter Muhlenberg, Joab Houghton, and Jonas Clark never existed. But they did exist; and without them, this country we call the United States of America would not exist.

Caldwell was a Presbyterian; Muhlenberg was a Lutheran; Houghton was a Baptist; and no one really seems to know what denomination (if any) Jonas Clark claimed, although one historian referred to Clark as a Trinitarian and Calvinist. But these men had one thing in common (besides their faith in Jesus Christ): they were all ardent patriots who participated in America's War for Independence, and in the case of Jonas Clark, actually ignited it.

James Caldwell

James Caldwell was called "The Rebel High Priest" or "The Fighting Chaplain." Caldwell is most famous for the "Give 'em Watts!" story.

During the Springfield (New Jersey) engagement, the Colonial militia ran out of wadding for their muskets. Quickly, Caldwell mounted his horse and galloped to the Presbyterian church, and returning with an armload of hymnals, threw them to the ground, and hollered, "Now, boys, give 'em Watts!" He was referring to the famous hymn writer, Isaac Watts, of course.

The British hated Caldwell so much, they murdered his wife, Hannah, in her own home, as she sat with her children on her bed. Later, a fellow American was bribed by the British to assassinate Pastor Caldwell—which is exactly what he did. Americans loyal to the Crown burned both his house and church. No less than three cities and two public schools in the State of New Jersey bear his name.

John Peter Muhlenberg

John Peter Muhlenberg was pastor of a Lutheran church in Woodstock, Virginia, when hostilities erupted between Great Britain and the American colonies. When news of Bunker Hill reached Virginia, Muhlenberg preached a sermon from Ecclesiastes 3 to his congregation. He reminded his parishioners that there was a time to preach and a time to fight. He said that, for him, the time to preach was past and it was time to fight. He then threw off his vestments and stood before his congregants in the uniform of a Virginia colonel.

Muhlenberg was later promoted to brigadier-general in the Continental Army, and then to

major general. He participated in the battles of Brandywine, Germantown, Monmouth, and Yorktown. He went on to serve in both the US House of Representatives and US Senate.

Joab Houghton

Joab Houghton was in the Hopewell (New Jersey) Baptist Meeting House at worship when he received the first information regarding the battles at Lexington and Concord. His great-grandson gives the following eloquent description of the way he treated the tidings:

"[M]ounting the great stone block in front of the meeting-house, he beckoned the people to stop. Men and women paused to hear, curious to know what so unusual a sequel to the service of the day could mean. At the first, words a silence, stern as death, fell over all. The Sabbath quiet of the hour and of the place was deepened into a terrible solemnity. He told them all the story of the cowardly murder at Lexington by the royal troops; the heroic vengeance following hard upon it; the retreat of Percy; the gathering of the children of the Pilgrims round the beleaguered hills of Boston; then pausing, and looking over the silent throng, he said slowly, 'Men of New Jersey, the red coats are murdering our brethren of New England! Who follows me to Boston?' And every man in that audience stepped out of line, and answered, 'I!' There was not a coward or a traitor in old Hopewell Baptist Meeting-House that day." (Cathcart, William. Baptists and the American Revolution. Philadelphia: S.A. George, 1876, rev. 1976. Print.)

Jonas Clark

As I said at the beginning of this column, Jonas Clark was pastor of the Church of Lexington, Massachusetts, on April 19, 1775, the day that British troops marched on Concord with orders to arrest Sam Adams and John Hancock, and to seize a cache of firearms. It was Pastor Clark's male congregants who were the first ones to face-off against the British troops as they marched through Lexington. When you hear the story of the Minutemen at the Battle of Lexington, remember those Minutemen were mostly Pastor Jonas Clark and the men of his congregation.

On the One Year Anniversary of the Battle of Lexington, Clark preached a sermon based upon

his eyewitness testimony of the event. He called his sermon, “The Fate of Blood-Thirsty Oppressors and God’s Tender Care of His Distressed People.” His sermon has been republished by Nordskog Publishing under the title, “The Battle of Lexington, A Sermon and Eyewitness Narrative, Jonas Clark, Pastor, Church of Lexington.”

Of course, these four brave preachers were not the only ones to participate in America’s fight for independence. There were Episcopalian ministers such as Dr. Samuel Provost of New York, Dr. John Croes of New Jersey, and Robert Smith of South Carolina. Presbyterian ministers such as Adam Boyd of North Carolina and James Armstrong of Maryland, along with many others, also took part.

Numerous Baptist preachers participated in America’s War for Independence, so many that at the conclusion of the war, President George Washington wrote a personal letter to the Baptist people saying, “I recollect with satisfaction that the religious societies of which you are a member have been, throughout America, uniformly and almost unanimously, the firm friends to civil liberty, and the preserving promoters of our glorious Revolution.” It also explains how Thomas Jefferson could write to a Baptist congregation and say, “We have acted together from the origin to the end of a memorable Revolution.” (McDaniel, George White. *The People Called Baptists*. The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1918. Print.)

And although not every pastor was able to actively participate in our fight for independence, because so many pastors throughout colonial America preached the principles of liberty and independence from their pulpits, the Crown created a moniker for them: The Black Regiment (referring to the long, black robes that so many colonial clergymen wore in the pulpit). Without question, the courageous preaching and example of colonial America’s patriot-pastors provided the colonists with the inspiration and resolve to resist the tyranny of the Crown and win America’s freedom and independence.

I invite readers to visit my Black Regiment web page to learn more about my attempt to resurrect America’s Black-Robed Regiment. Go to:

Black Regiment

Readers should know, too, that a brand new book co-authored by me and my constitutional attorney son, Tim, entitled, “To Keep Or Not To Keep: Why Christians Should Not Give Up Their Guns,” will be released in just a few days. This book examines the entire Bible, both Old and New Testaments, and proves conclusively that nowhere does God expect His people to surrender their arms in the face of any would-be tyrant. With hundreds of references, we show from both Natural and Revealed Law that the right of self-defense, the right to keep and bear arms, is a God-ordained right and responsibility. This book is sure to be a blockbuster. To order the book, go to:

Keep Your Arms

This is the fighting heritage of America’s pastors and preachers. So, what has happened? What has happened to that fighting spirit that once existed, almost universally, throughout America’s Christian denominations? How have preachers become so timid, so shy, and so cowardly that they will stand apathetic and mute as America faces the destruction of its liberties? Where are the preachers to explain, expound, and extrapolate the principles of liberty from Holy Writ?

I am absolutely convinced that one of the biggest reasons America is in the sad condition that it is in today is because the sermons Americans frequently hear from modern pulpits deal mostly with prosperity theology, entertainment evangelism, feelgoodism, emotionalism, and Aren’t-I-Wonderful ear tickling! One man recently wrote and told me that his ears had been tickled so much in church that he had calluses on them.

This milquetoast preaching, along with a totally false “obey-the-government-no-matter-what” interpretation of Romans 13, have made it next to impossible to find Christian men with the courage and resolve to stand against the onslaught of socialism, corporatism, and, yes, fascism that is swallowing America whole.

The Name of Jesus

Are we to baptize in the name of the "Father, Son and Holy Ghost", or in the name of Jesus? The following list would seem to be dispositive of the question: Baptism is in the name of *Jesus only*. The formula, "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" was never once used by the New Testament church. Not once. If we are to follow the pattern of faith and practice in the New Testament, we too will baptize in the name of Jesus only. "*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*" (Acts 4:12)

Men were to prophesy *in his name*. (Matt.7:22)
Men cast out devils *in his name*. (Matt. 7:22; Mk. 9:38,39; Lk.9:49)
The gentiles would trust *in his name*. (Matt. 12:21)
We are to receive each other *in his name*. (Matt.18:5)
Jesus is present where two or three gather *in his name*. (Matt. 18:20)
We will be rewarded for every act of kindness done *in his name*. (Mk. 9:41)
Devils were subject to the seventy *in his name*. (Lk. 10:17)
We are to preach repentance and remission of sins *in his name*. (Lk. 24:47)
He has given power to become sons of God to all that believe *on his name*. (Jn. 1:12)
Men are condemned who do not believe *in the name* of the only begotten Son of God. (Jn. 3:18)
We have whatsoever petitions we ask *in his name*. (Jn. 14:13,14;15:16; 16:23,24,26)
The Comforter and Holy Ghost was sent *in his name*. (Jn. 14:26)
We have life *through his name*. (Jn. 20:31)
We are saved *by his name*. (Acts 2:21; Rom. 10:13)
We have remissions of sins by baptism *in his name*. (Acts 2:38)
Peter healed the lame man *in his name*. (Acts 3:6; 4:7,10)
The apostles prayed that wonders might be done *in his name*. (Acts 4:30)
The apostles taught *in his name*. (Acts 4:17,18; 5:28)
The apostles suffered *for his name*. (Acts 5:41)
The Samaritans believed Philip's preaching concerning the kingdom of God and *Jesus' name*. (Acts 8:12)
The Samaritans were baptized *in his name*. (Acts 4:16)
Saul persecuted all that called upon *his name*. (Acts 9:14)
To him all the prophets bear witness that men receive remission of sins *through his name*. (Acts 10:43)
The household of Cornelius was commanded to be baptized *in his name*. (Acts 10:48)
The Ephesians were baptized *in his name*. (Acts 19:5)
Men's sins are washed away by invoking *his name* in baptism. (Acts 22:16)
Paul charged the churches *in his name*. (I Cor. 1:10; 5:4; II Thess. 3:6)
We are justified *in his name*. (I Cor. 6:11)
We are to give thanks to the Father *in his name*. (Eph. 5:20)
Jesus' name is **above every name** that is named. (Phil. 2:9)
Whatsoever we do in word or deed, do all *in the name* of the Lord. (Col. 3:17)
Disciples are to be called *by his name* (*i.e.*, "Christian") (Acts 11:26; 26:28; Jm. 2:7; I Pet. 4:16)
Men are commanded to believe *on his name*. (I Jn. 3:23)
Those that believe *on his name* have eternal life. (I Jn. 5:13)
Men were martyred *for his name*. (Rev. 2:13; 6:9)

The New Heavens and Earth

Introduction

There are many misconceptions about the new heavens and new earth mentioned in the Bible. Some believe that the eternal state is alluded to; others that a future paradise on earth is in view; still others that the New Testament is symbolized. However, none of these views enjoys support of the scriptures. The following is a verse-by-verse exposition of the promised new heavens and earth. We will conclude that the new heavens and earth were symbols for the prevailing conditions and changed fortunes of God's people in the world under the reigning Christ following the tribulation of the last days; they look to New Testament times, but are not the New Testament itself.

Isaiah: The Source of the Imagery

The promise of the new heavens and earth occurs in Isaiah, where the prophet uses it to describe the happy circumstance of God's people after the time of tribulation and persecution is past, and their enemies are destroyed. The prophecy moves alternately between the coming destruction of the rebellious among the Jews and the blessing of salvation upon those that obey. The historical context may look in the first instance to the nation's captivity under the Assyrians and Babylonians and the return of the captivity under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, but, unquestionably, the prophecy looks beyond these events unto the eschatological judgments and blessing of the Messiah.

Jews Refuse the Gospel

First, the prophet describes the Jews' obstinate rebellion and unwillingness to obey God's word, and the resultant wrath they would suffer:

I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name. I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts...Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom...I will measure

their former work into their bosom." Isa. 65:1, 2, 6, 7

St. Paul applies these verses to the time of the Messiah, when the Jewish nation was resisting the gospel and persecuting the church, but the Gentiles were flowing into the kingdom like flocks of sheep. (Rom. 10:20) Those that had not formerly sought God now suddenly found him; but those whom God had eagerly sought after and entreated, refused his offer of grace. The like scenario played out in the days of the Assyrians and Babylonians, in which the prophets warned and entreated only to be persecuted and slain, yet strangers from among the Gentiles, like Nebuchadnezzar, obeyed the living God.

A Remnant of Jews Would Believe and Obey

The prophet next describes God's salvation for the remnant of those that obey:

Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not: for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all. And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. Isa. 65: 8, 9

The prophet then alternates between the two in a series of verses (vv. 11-13), which conclude with the destruction of the wicked among the Jews, who leave their name (Israel) as it were a curse for God's people (so hated were they among the nations), but God would call his faithful by a new name: *Christian*.

Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit. And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name. Isa. 65:14, 15

In the beginning of the gospel, the Roman world did not distinguish between Jews and Christians, for they seemed to be but sects of the same religion. Thus, the confusion caused the Jews'

name to be applied with disadvantage to the Christians in hatred and reproach. However, by the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, this was no longer true, and the world came to distinguish distinctly between the two. The Lord would thus slay the Jews, but assign a new name to his people. The term Christian is the divinely appointed name for God's people. It was given first at Antioch of Syria. (Acts 11:26) Peter says if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but to glorify God in this behalf (I Pet. 4:16).

The Promised New Heavens and Earth after the Time of Trouble

Isaiah next describes the happy estate of his servants when the time of tribulation and persecution is past:

The former troubles are past forgotten...they are hid from mine eyes. For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. Isa. 65:16-19

The new heavens and earth describe the changed circumstances of God's people, in which the former troubles were now forgotten. Whereas they had been under oppression and persecution by their fellow countrymen who refused to heed God's word, they would see happier times. The time of national and personal sorrow under the Assyrians and Babylonians (in the first instance, but in the Messianic context, under the Jews and Romans,) would give way to a time when the faithful of God's people would enjoy security and peace. The Jerusalem that had suffered siege and famine would give way to a Jerusalem that enjoyed an abundance of peace. The inhabitants of the new Jerusalem would "dwell every man under his vine and under his fig tree" (Isa. 65:21). We should not mistake the poetic description of the new Jerusalem for the new heavens and earth. The prophet's language saying "the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock" refers only to "the holy mountain" of the Lord (Isa. 65:25), not the world at large. Only in the church do the conditions described

prevail. Millennialists commonly make this very mistake by applying language intended only for the church to the whole world, supposing a time of universal peace is foretold.

The Second Coming

The preceding portion of the prophecy makes no direct reference to the coming of Christ; we are told the rebellious would be destroyed, but not how. The prophecy continues in chapter sixty-six; this time, however, the prophet makes unmistakable reference to the destruction of the Jewish nation by the second coming of Christ. First, the prophet describes God's anger for the Jews' idolatrous devotion to the temple:

Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? And where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. Isa. 66: 1, 2

Stephen quoted this verse before the Sanhedrin when accused of saying that Christ would come and destroy the city and temple (Acts 6:14, 15; 7:48-50). His point in quoting the prophet is to show that he was affirming nothing that had not been foretold centuries before and therefore could not be accused of impiety toward the temple and service of God. However, like a self-fulfilling prophecy, the Sanhedrin would not listen, and stoned Stephen. The Jews' obstinate refusal to accept the gospel even while clinging to the empty temple ritual was foreseen by Isaiah, who thus foretold the coming destruction in the prophecy here. Hence, the prophet next describes God's disdain for the temple cultus:

He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not. (Isa. 66:3, 4)

The offerings of the temple are likened to unclean and abominable things; they were no longer acceptable because Christ had carried his blood within the Holy of Holies. The continuing temple ritual was an implicit denial of Christ's sacrifice.

Jewish Persecution of Christians Foretold

Next, Isaiah speaks to the persecution of Christians by unbelieving Jews and the promise of Christ's coming:

Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed. Isa. 66: 5

Christ “Appears” to Save His People, and Destroy the Jews

The “appearance” of Christ is referred to by the writer of Hebrews, who says Christ as our High Priest would appear a second time to put his enemies beneath his feet (Heb. 9:27). The apostle John seems to have this verse in mind when he exhorted his readers to persevere under persecution that they “be not ashamed before him at his coming” (I Jno. 2:28). The appearance of Christ would be providential, not physical or visible, and would mark the destruction of Jerusalem and the relief of the church. This is clear from what Isaiah says next, describing Christ coming in wrath upon the nation:

A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, as voice of the Lord that rendereth recompence to his enemies...For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. Isa. 66: 5, 15

Here is explicit reference to the coming of the Lord to destroy his enemies in the events culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, predictions repeated by Christ in his Olivet discourse (Matt. 24, 25; Mk. 13; Lk. 21). We can know that the second coming is being described because the prophet portrays the new heavens and earth following the destruction of the city and temple (Isa. 66:22-24; cf. Matt. 19:28; Rev. 21, 22). The prophet states that those who escaped the siege – *Christians who obeyed*

Jesus' warning to flee when they saw the city compassed about with armies (Lk. 21:20, 21) – would declare God's glory (preach the gospel) among the Gentiles. (Isa. 66:19) Isaiah states that these would become the spiritual “priests and Levites” (cf. I Pet. 2:5) of the New Testament in the new heavens and earth:

“And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord. For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come and worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.” (Isa. 66:21-24)

“All flesh” is equivalent to “every creature” and “all nations” of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15, 16). “Worshipping before the Lord” points to the assimilation of the Gentiles into the kingdom (church). Those whose carcasses were eaten of fire and worms refers to the bodies of the Jews who perished in the ravages of war, famine, and pestilence during the siege. Josephus reports that eleven-hundred-thousand Jews (1.1 million) were slain in the siege of Jerusalem.¹¹ These were cast out of the city into the valley of Gehenna during the siege, where they lay swollen and putrefied, eaten of maggots and worms.¹²

This brief survey shows that the new heavens and earth spoke to the time when the church would emerge victorious after a time of persecution. Whereas they had been scorned and rejected, put out of the synagogue and even put to death, the Lord would vindicate his gospel and avenge his servants’ blood. The Jews would be destroyed in the war with Rome, but the church would go on to *inherit the world*.

Other Aspects of the New Heavens and Earth

¹¹ Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, VI, ix, 3. This figure does not include that perished in foreign cities or died in battles throughout the rest of the Judah and Galilee.

¹² Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, V, xii, 3, 4.

The above represents the new heavens and earth as portrayed by the prophet Isaiah. John also treats of these in the book of Revelation. He does not change what Isaiah wrote, but adds a few particulars of his own.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. Rev. 21:1-3

With the defeat of the church's enemies, John sees a new heaven and earth. It is distinguished from the first heaven and earth only by the absence of the sea, and the presence of God dwelling amidst his people in the church (the new Jerusalem). Under the old economy, God dwelt with man only in shadow and type. The temple merely foreshadowed "good things to come" (Heb. 10:1). From the time of Adam's fall to the cross, the barrier of sin - portrayed by the veil in the temple - separated man from God. The veil was rent in twain in Christ's cross (Matt. 27:51), showing man the way back into the presence of God was through Jesus' blood. John thus sees the consummation of God's redemptive purpose, when face-to-face communion with his people is restored through Christ in the church. ("And they shall see his face" Rev. 22:4; cf. Heb. 10:19, 20) The absence of the sea points to the fact that all men approach God on equal terms. Seas are natural barriers, separating earth's people. In Revelation, the sea symbolized the Gentiles; the earth or land, the Jews. Under the new economy, those distinctions are removed and all men have access to God equally. The gates of the city (church) are always open in every direction of the compass, showing that men from all over the world are invited to enter and find salvation and communion with God (Rev. 21:13, 25). Thus, Paul could say to the Gentiles:

But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ...Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God. Eph. 2:13, 19

Of course, the new heaven and earth are *not* the new covenant. The city (the church) is the covenantal habitation of the saints. Outside the city are the lost; those that have not obeyed the gospel: "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (Rev. 22:15).

*The new heaven and earth, and troubled sea, having passed away and represented as being no more, indicated the changed conditions within the existing governments and society to make them favorable for the prosperity of the cause of Christ and his church throughout the empire...the vision represented the new conditions to surround the church in the changed world.*¹³

Conclusion

The new heavens and earth were symbols for the prevailing conditions and changed fortunes of God's people in the world under the reigning Christ following the tribulation of the last days; they look to New Testament times, but are not the New Testament itself.



¹³ Foy E. Wallace, *The Book of Revelation* (1963, Wallace Publications, Ft. Worth), p., 426.