

Lesson Thirteen

QUESTIONS ABOUT WHETHER THE DEVIL CAN ACTUALLY PERFORM SUPERNATURAL DEEDS OR NOT

1. There is only one Creator. No one else ever creates anything.

God is said to have given the devil permission to take away Job's property. Job said, "The Lord gives and the Lord takes away." The devil did not have that power of his own. He probably tried to get Job to think he did, but Job was not persuaded. Is Job right or wrong? Did God take away, or did the devil?

Can Satan give an order that "fire should come down out of heaven" or make an image breathe (Rev. 13:11-17). Who is in charge of ordering things in heaven (or on earth)? Satan or God? While men were convinced the "beast" was invincible (Rev. 13:4), God revealed through John that the beast was human (Rev. 13:18), not supernatural, not divine, not to be worshiped!

2. Only God is Almighty. How does one distinguish what or who is almighty from that which is not?

If the distinguishing criteria of almightiness appears in two persons or realms, can both be almighty? If only one can be real, what is the other?—partly real?

It is a law or logic that two contradictory propositions cannot both be true!

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3. If one says we distinguish what we are to believe as actual or real by whether the attending message or doctrine is true and good or not, how does one substantiate which message is good? If we say the message of God does not lie, how do we determine it does not lie? If the devil has supernatural power how are we to determine that his message is not substantiated as "good" and those who claim to speak for the Lord as "bad"?

The ethical value of what God says is good cannot be substantiated on the basis of pragmatism (it works) because that makes every person able to say what works for you doesn't work for me. The *absolute* ethical value of God's statement of "good" depends on authority. Authority depends on demonstration of faithfulness and sovereignty in the absolute degree. How could that allow for *real* supernaturalism to be arrogated to someone else?

4. Did the devil have the real power to produce what he promised in the Garden of Eden? II Cor. 11:3 says he deceived Eve by his cunning to lead her thoughts astray.

II Thess. 2:9-12 says the devil, through the "lawless one," is to do *pretended* (Gr. *pseudo, false, fake*) signs and wonders, with all wicked deception (Gr. *apate, cheating, beguiling, false impressions, unscrupulous*) for those who refuse to love the truth. God will send to them a *working* (Gr. *energeian*) of *error* (Gr. *planes, astray, wandering, planet*) to believe the *lie* (Gr. *pseudei*) for those having not believed the truth, but are having pleasure in unrighteousness.

Does that sound like actual miracles are going to be given to lead people astray?

5. The supernatural things done by God (and his representatives) are said to be moral *facts* in themselves which in turn delineate in man's experience the existence and nature of God (cf. Rom. 1:18ff.; Acts 14:15-18; Acts 17:22-31, et al). If there are other supernatural facts being done which are capable of competing on the same level, in the realm of the factual, what do they delineate—that there are two Gods? If these two supernatural facts are both facts, how are we to decide to which ones to surrender? the one who seems to have the most workable doctrine?
6. Is Satan's power to deceive in the reality of a supernatural event actually done or is it in the interpretation he wishes us to make of the event which *appears* to be a supernatural event? If it really is a supernatural event accomplished by the devil (or a human being today), what interpretation are we to make?
7. Paul writes that we should not let the devil *defraud* us (Gr. *pleonekte-thomen*) by being agnostic about his *devices* (Gr. *noemata, mentality—not miracles*) II Cor. 2:11.

QUESTIONS - CAN DEVIL PERFORM SUPERNATURAL DEEDS?

The mind is powerful. Ideas and thoughts have tremendous capabilities. Mental, psychological trauma has caused amazing effects over personalities and even over physical functions.

8. Jesus stated that it was a logical impossibility that Satan would cast out demons for Satan would be defeating himself. Therefore, when demons are really, actually cast out, only the Lord could be doing it. If alleged modern exorcisms are actual, then Jesus is working through Catholicism, through witch-doctors, etc. The Jews of Jesus time did not really cast out demons or they would have had the evidence to really accuse Jesus of blasphemy.
9. Two passages in Deuteronomy appear to conflict. Deut. 13:1-5; 18:20-22.

Perhaps Deut. 13:1-5 means, If what a prophet gives as a sign or wonder *appears* to come to pass, and if he says, Let us go after other gods . . . do not follow him . . . his signs are really false.

One should not go after other gods because one knows what has appeared to come to pass has only appeared to do so. Only true prophet's signs and predictions factually come to pass.

10. Those who did not repent of their sorceries, Rev. 9:21, repented not of *pharmakeion*—the Greek word for “sorceries” is the word from which we get English, pharmacy. Is it possible that the “sorcerers” worked their alleged signs and wonders by chemicals and pharmaceutical properties.

The word translated *magic* (RSV) in Acts 19:19 is Gr. *periergos* and means *curiosity, inquisitive*, or, literally, “Things that are appearing to work—*superfluous*.” Things not reality, but things in the realm of question or doubtful.

Elijah's challenge to the prophets of Baal is instructive. Elijah said, “How long will you go limping with two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.” And during the contest the prophets of Baal could *not* call down fire from heaven! even though they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out of them. Here is the time for the devil to do a miracle, if he can!

11. Let us consider again the text in Job.
 - a. God said to Satan, “Behold all that he has is in your power. . . .” The Hebrew word is *yadeka* from *yod*, literally, “Hand.” This word is used metonymically for “power” in Deut. 32:36; II Kings 19:26; Job 5:20; Psa. 22:20; 49:15; Isa. 37:27; 47:14; Dan. 6:27; Hosea 13:14; and Micah 2:1, but never of any supernatural power.
 - b. Job's first disaster was perpetrated by the Sabeans falling upon his servants and slaying animals and servants. The devil could have put it into the minds of *men* by the vehicle of falsehood (communicated in language) to do this.

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Job's second disaster is said specifically to be the fire of *God* falling from heaven.

Job's third disaster was the Chaldeans raiding and slaying with the sword—nothing supernatural here.

Job's fourth disaster is the death of his children *while they were drinking wine*, during a windstorm. Perhaps they were deceived by Satan into getting drunk and could have escaped the windstorm had they not been drunk. Does not necessarily have to be a supernatural, occult, windstorm which the devil worked—it could be God's windstorm.

c. Job, chapter 2:

God says to the devil, “. . . you moved *me* against him” (2:3) “to destroy him. . . .” The devil moved *God* to destroy Job!

The devil says to God, “. . . put forth thy hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face . . .” (2:5). The devil knows that only God has the supernatural power to touch Job's flesh.

In 2:7 the Hebrew text literally reads, “So went out Satan from the face of Jehovah. And *he struck Job with burning ulcers, bad, from the sole of his foot to the top of his head.*”

Who is the antecedent of “he”—God or Satan? The nearest is God.

d. If it is God really exercising *His* supernatural power in all this what does God give into the “hand” of Satan?

I think it is simply the permission for Satan to try to *deceive* Job (and the world) into *thinking* he (Satan) is exercising this power. Satan has permission from God to *pretend* this or these powers belong to him.

How does Satan pull off this pretense? By lying to men and letting men use all human craftiness at their disposal to make it appear what is being done is supernatural.

The devil, by lying, tempted Job (through his friends) to think what had befallen him was evil. It really was chastening. All that we think about physical discomfort or loss is that there is some supernatural evil doing evil to us. Actually it is all chastening. What is evil about it is the lie that it is not in the sovereign control and will of God. It is the *power of fear* (of death) by which Satan enslaves men (Heb. 2:14-15). Satan has no power to supernaturally kill (or even naturally), or make alive. He has the “power” only to lie to people that he has such power.

12. Judas had power to do miracles (Mt. 10:1ff.). He also allowed the devil to come into him. Who gave him power to do miracles?

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Simon the Sorcerer wanted to buy Holy Spirit power to do miracles but Peter said, "you have neither part nor lot in this matter" (Acts 8:18-24).

It is possible, therefore, that those who would prophesy and exorcise demons in Mt. 7:21 did so through power given by God and then later became those "working lawlessness" (Gr. *ergazomenoi ten anomian*) (Mt. 7:23), just like Judas.

13. Or, do we propose that everything which *appears* to be miracle *is*—but that only *some* are from God and *some* are from the devil?

How do we decide which are which? Do we have to decide? We are told we should not permit ourselves to be deceived—if we do not decide which are from God, we are in danger of being deceived.

If it is to be decided on the basis of which doctrine or works are good or evil—how do we decide that? From the Bible? How do we decide the Bible is speaking the truth? And does the Bible really say the devil has authority and power to do a real miracle?

How was it decided at the very first (in the garden of Eden)? How did God expect Eve to be able to decide whether the devil could produce what he promised so she could make the decision of faith?

OR IS FAITH A "LEAP IN THE DARK" AFTER ALL?

This is not an attempt to deny the Scriptures—it is an attempt to understand them.

A SICK SOCIETY SIGNS ITS OWN DEATH CERTIFICATE

Introduction

I. SOCIETY IS MUCH LIKE THE HUMAN BODY

- A. It is structurally and functionally sound only when it maintains integration or wholeness by adherence to specific logical and moral principles.
- B. The Creator has made the whole universe to be sustained by logical and moral principles. Individuals, families and nations
 1. Even that which man has called "natural law" is sustained, reason dictates, by a Divine power which is just, logical, good and purposeful.
 2. If the power behind what man sees in "natural" phenomena, and there must be a power behind it, were capricious, evil and without purpose, life as we know it could not exist.
- C. When the logical and moral principles are disobeyed, disintegration, dissipation and death follow—whether personally, or

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socially. When disintegration of the social structures begin to occur, one may logically conclude the society is sick.

II. EXAMPLES OF SICK SOCIETIES WHICH BROUGHT ABOUT THEIR OWN DEATHS BY DISOBEYING THESE PRINCIPLES.

A. Many ancient cultures exemplify our proposition

1. Egypt
2. Babylon
3. Persia
4. Greece
5. Each began in austerity, self-discipline and adherence to certain standards of justice and decency.
6. Each eventually turned to emphasizing materialism, fleshly indulgence, exploitation of human rights.

B. Two societies exemplifying this which fall within biblical history

1. Jews of the divided kingdoms (recorded by the Old Testament prophets)
2. Roman Empire after the 1st century (as predicted by Revelation)

III. IS OUR SOCIETY SICK?

A. Item in Joplin Globe, 12-14-75, entitled, *Shoplifting: Rapidly Growing Crime*, A Boston police detective analyzed his experience as: "A dire picture of a very sick society."

B. T.V. commentators; Talk-show hosts; Newspaper editorialists; Government officials; Sociologists; Educators; and the common working public are all pronouncing the sickness of our society.

C. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (Nobel prize winner, exiled from Russia, having spent many years in Russian political concentration camps) speaks and writes (Dec. 1975 Reader's Digest) with fervor and alarm about the sickness of Western civilization.

D. U.S. is not the only sick society.

1. Joplin Globe, 9-21-75: Denmark: 25% emigration of total population out of the country; middle class pays about 60% in taxes; 55% of people say Danish society is moving toward undisciplined, alienated and stress-burdened generation.
2. Reader's Digest, Jan. 1966, article on sickness of Great Britain.

I. SYMPTOMS OF A SICK SOCIETY

A. Social Anarchy

1. Fractured families

- a. Jews - Adultery, rebellion against parents, divorce was rampant

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- during divided kingdom: Jer. 5:7-8; Hosea 4:1-2; 7:4; Amos 2:7; Micah 7:5-6; Mal. 2:10, 15.
- b. Rome - Caligula lived in habitual incest with his sisters; Nero married a homosexual boy in public ceremony; Messalina, wife of Claudius went at night to serve in a common city brothel; Seneca writes, certain noble ladies reckon their years by the number of husbands . . . leave home in order to marry and marry in order to divorce. In such a society children were a misfortune . . . drowned by mothers, left to die of cold and to be eaten by dogs . . . a Roman father entering a brothel might well be served by his own abandoned child.
 - c. America - Every 90 seconds another American marriage is dissolved; homosexual marriages are permitted; homosexual churches; pornographic movies are being made where people are actually tortured and slain; high public officials (Presidents) entertain prostitutes in the White House; FBI reports 29% of all murders are within families—mates killing mates, parents killing children, children killing parents.
2. Commercial chaos
- a. Jews - Materialism was god, cheating, robbery, extortion, waste, exorbitant taxation was all-pervasive: Isa. 5:8; 9:19-20; Hosea 12:8; 13:6; Amos 3:15; 5:11; Micah 2:2; 3:5; Mal. 3:8-9; Isa. 28:14-15; Jer. 8:5-11; 9:4-5; Hos. 10:4; 12:1, 7; Amos 8:5; Micah 6:10-12; 7:5-6; Hosea 4:1-2; 7:1.
 - b. Rome - Tacitus began his history: "I am entering on the history of a period rich in disasters, frightful in wars, torn by civil strife, and even in peace full of horrors." Exorbitant taxation to support rich men's indulgences; slave labor; millions on government dole; costly wars; rebellion of working class; private enterprise controlled by the State unparalleled in history; breakdown of discipline in the armed forces; cheating and robbery.
 - c. America - There are nearly 300,000 robberies each year in U.S. Over 2,000,000 burglaries each year with loss of 600 million to property owners. 140 million shoplifters per year costing \$5 billion to store owners which buying public eventually pays for; woman in Florida in maxi-dress walked out of store with 19-inch color TV between her legs! Crime in America, statistics prove, not primarily committed by poverty class but by middle-to-high income people! doctors, lawyers, teachers, nuns, priests, ministers, rabbis; one doctor making

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\$300,000 per year just on medicaid patients plus \$250,000 per year on other practice and some medicaid patients using other people's cards; welfare programs of New York City bankrupt it! Read, *The Permissive Society* by Boris Sokoloff, pub. Arlington House, and *Poverty Is Where The Money Is*, by Shirley Scheibla, pub. Arlington House. Social Security funds depleted and in deficit; food-stamp rip-offs. COMMERCIAL, FINANCIAL CHAOS!

3. Lawless legions

- a. Jews - rebellion and rejection of discipline, murder, drunkenness, complacency; injustice; Isa. 1:2; Jer. 44:15ff.; Ezek. 3:6-7; 5:5-6; Hos. 10:3; Isa. 5:7, 23; 10:1-3; 33:8; Jer. 5:26-28; Hos. 10:13; Amos 2:7; 4:1; 5:10-12; 6:12; 8:4; Micah 2:2; 2:8-10; Isa. 5:22; 28:1-13; Hos. 4:11, 18; Amos 2:12; 4:1; 6:6; Zeph. 1:12; Ezek. 13:10; Amos 6:6; Hosea 4:1-2; Micah 7:1-2.
- b. Rome - men in high offices, slaves, informers, workers robbed and ruined in every direction amid universal hatred and terror according to Tacitus. Juvenal says: honesty is mouthed and disregarded, and it is to their crimes that men owe their riches . . . vice, gambling was rampant and at its acme. Seneca looked at the Roman Forum and said there were as many vices gathered there as men . . . every place is full of crime and violence . . . innocence is not rare—it is non-existent.
- c. America - In Ellensburg, Washington, authorities were faced with a pistol-packing gang of juveniles from junior high school who threatened to shoot up the Juvenile Court to free one of their leaders (Joplin Globe, 1-1-76); School teachers defying a court injunction; In Washington a college student resisted a holdup and was shot dead. The armed robber-killer pleaded guilty. But the judge said, "I don't think it would be to his advantage or to society's to send him to prison." (Paul Harvey); In Chicago last year there were 1000 crimes per day—only 7% were indicted and only 3 out of 100 indicted ever went to jail. Women are raped in Washington D.C. on parking lots in broad daylight; old people are attacked and robbed on the Joplin Mall in broad daylight; politicians consider themselves above the law; citizens take the law into their own hands; In Atlantic City, a motel owner saw 4 boys breaking in. At gunpoint he held them for police. Two had done time. But the N.J. judge released

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the 4 burglars, and a grand jury indicted the motel owner for carrying an unlicensed gun.

SOCIETIES CANNOT EXIST WITHOUT LAWS. LAWS THAT ARE NOT ENFORCED ARE USELESS! WITHOUT PENALTY THERE IS NO LAW!

B. Political Disintegration

1. Personal lives

- a. Jews - their kings and princes were adulterers, deceitful, drunkards, idolaters, arrogant; Isa. 1:23; 3:1-12; 32:5-6; Hosea 7:5-7; 8:4; 9:15; Micah 3:9-11; 7:3; Zeph. 3:3 (see other references in Social Anarchy which apply).
- b. Rome - Julius Caesar consorted with homosexuals; Caligula wanted to appoint his horse to the Roman Senate; Nero was a 17-year-old profligate when he became emperor; Nero poisoned his cousin and ordered his mother killed; Domitian ruled like Hitler and Stalin purging his own political system by murder, etc.; political jealousy between leaders led to eventual break up of the empire.
- c. America - Presidents (FDR, IKE, JFK) have had their paramours. Teddy Kennedy's exploits and coverup of the judicial facts; Truman, Johnson, Nixon, Agnew and their financial subterfuge; Congressmen and their porkbarrelling; rake-offs; junkets. Many political officer-holders and their affiliations with criminal characters.

2. Philosophies of government

- a. Jews - trust in military establishment; trust in foreign alliances; socialistic; materialistic; idolatrous; despising God; deceit; pride in human nature; Isa. 2:7; 30:1-2; 31:1; Hosea 5:13; 8:9-10; 10:13; *socialism* Micah 3:5; *partiality* Isa. 3:9; Mal. 2:9.
- b. Rome - advocated imperialism world-wide in order to provide revenue for their luxuries; advocated aristocracy and slavery; forced middle-class to pay very high taxes to pay for "dole" for slaves and poverty-class as well as for public works and indulgences of the rich.
- c. America - socialistic! guaranteed wage; welfare; socialized transportation; socialized medicine; socialized education; socialized industry. Socialism is killing Denmark, Sweden, Great Britain.

YES, WE HAVE ALL THE SYMPTOMS OF A SICK SOCIETY. WHAT HAS BEEN WRITTEN HERE CAN BE MULTIPLIED BY AS MANY COMMUNITIES AS THERE ARE IN THE U.S. NO COMMUNITY IS IMMUNE!

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C. Cultural Degradation (Music, Art, Literature, Theater)

1. Jews - music became vain (empty, meaningless) and profane; art took on the grotesque, obscene form of the pagan idols; they “kissed calves” and practiced all the “artistic” rituals of idolatry: Amos 5:23; 6:5; Ezek. 8:10, 14; Hosea 13:2; “they consecrated themselves to Baal and became detestable like the thing they loved” Hosea 9:10.
2. Rome - Romans were great builders but their materialism and paganism tended to make most of them contemptuous of art and culture (the Greeks were idealists); the Roman theater was debased; they were more interested in the slaughter and blood of the games in the arena (179 days of each year devoted to games at one time—11,000 men and 15,000 beasts fought that year to the death); gluttony and spending was their main pastime, they built vomitoriums in their homes where people might go and gag themselves and vomit so they might return to the banquet table and eat more; Nero played dice for \$90,000 per point. Seneca says this was all due to their boredom . . . they are restless because they are left with nothing to do, and they do not know how to dispose of their leisure. Their songs were praise to wine, fertility, the emperor and gladiators.
3. America - loud, obscene, cynical, anarchistic, rebellious MUSIC; senseless, formless, obscene, pessimistic, anarchistic, destructive ART; obscene, politically anarchistic, religiously blasphemous, sadistic, THEATER.

II. DIAGNOSIS OF SICKNESS (Why?)

A. Falsehood, irrationality, lying doctrines about God and men

1. Jews - idolatry, despising God, lack of knowledge of God and His Word, listening to diviners and soothsayers, false religious teaching Isa. 2:8; 40:18-20; 41:21-24; 44:9-20; Jer. 10:1-5; Ezek. 8:9-10; Hosea 4:12-13; 13:2; Isa. 1:4; 30:9-11; 5:24; Jer. 6:10-19; 36:20ff.; Micah 2:6-11; Mal. 3:14; Isa. 2:6; 8:19; Zeph. 1:5; Isa. 1:3; 5:12-13; Jer. 6:16; Hosea 4:6 *stupidity* Jer. 1:5; 2:27; Hosea 7:11 *false teaching* Jer. 5:12; Ezek. 13:6; Hosea 9:10; Zeph. 3:4; Mal. 2:7-9.
2. Rome - The Romans were cynical and skeptical of their idol-gods Diodorus Siculus writes, the myths that are told of the affairs in Hades . . . are pure invention. Philosophers considered all religions false. To the Cynics the Olympian gods were both man-made and man-like creations. There was nothing true for man to refer to for moral, social or personal decisions. Romans all practiced astrology. Romans 1:21ff. “. . . they became

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futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles.”

3. America - In an article in Time Magazine, 3-13-72, entitled, “The New Cult of Madness: Thinking as a Bad Habit” the writer says: “Many intellectuals have even given up thinking—or tried to—as if it were a bad habit. Scrambled across their work as guidance for the public is the new and purgative graffiti: ‘Nothing makes sense.’ . . . Reason and logic have . . . become dirty words—death words. They have been replaced by the life words ‘feeling’ and ‘impulse.’ Consciousness—the rational—is presumed to be shallow and unconsciousness—the irrational—to be always interesting, often profound and usually true.”
 - a. Nietzsche, German philosopher, prophesied, “All that is now called culture, education, civilization will one day have to appear before the incorruptible judge, Dionysus, the Greek god of ecstasy, intoxication and madness.” IN LARGE SEGMENTS OF OUR SOCIETY THE ANTI-MIND ATTITUDE PREVAILS (EVEN IN CHURCHES)!
 - b. Charles Darwin (evolution) and Sigmund Freud (psychoanalysis) are the two men most responsible for the derogation of reason and belief in America.
 - c. Boris Sokoloff, says in *The Permissive Society*: “Freud’s doctrines, and particularly his ethics, are the product of his concept of the human race. There is no purpose in man’s existence. There is no goal in mankind’s presence on the earth. There is no God or Supreme Power. And if this is so, ‘all is permitted,’ as Russian nihilists of a century ago declared. Thus the ground for *extreme permissiveness* is firmly planted by Freud. Man is born only to die. He must profit while he lives. His life is dominated by a pleasure-sexual instinct. Man wants only pleasure; he avoids pain. He does not like to work, because it is society or a nation which represses his instinctual driving and by doing so makes him miserable and unhappy, inducing neurosis. All men are neurotic. The human race is neurotic. The fault is that of society, or what we might call ‘The Establishment.’ . . . culture and civilization bring about an ever-increasing and overpowering neurosis . . . the individual has no obligation toward society. It is society which must take care of the individual, for he is the victim of The Establishment.”

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- d. Psychoanalysis demands that patients talk and think about themselves, specifically of their sexual feelings. The analyst incites the swollen ego to grow even more with the result that patients become self-centered, conceited, and selfish. Psycho-analysts' efforts are directed to prove to patients that they are right, that there is no reason to blame themselves for anything they have done.
 - e. Many politicians and intellectuals of the 1920s and 30s adopted Freudian doctrines. Especially is this true of the so-called "social-prophets" of that era—writers, playwrights, and sociologists (Hemingway, Theodore Dreiser, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Tennessee Williams, Eugene O'Neill, etc.).
- B. Reversal of Values; Perversion; Exploitation of man
1. Jews
 - a. Reversal of values: Isa. 5:20; 29:16; Micah 3:1-2; Amos 5:14-15; Mal. 3:15
 - b. Exploitation: Hosea 4:8-9; Amos 6:6; 8:6; Micah 3:11; Jer. 23:1-4; Ezek. 34:1-24
 - c. Depravation of Women: Isa. 3:16ff.; Ezek. 13:18
 - d. Permissive attitude: Hosea 5:4
 2. Rome
 - a. Evil was called good; Nero sexually attacked his own mother; homosexuality was chic among the upper classes of Romans.
 - b. Religion was used to keep the masses afraid of the State.
 - c. Working class was exploited for taxes.
 - d. Only in the blood and death of the arena could jaded emotions find any thrill.
 - e. Seneca writes: "Man, an object of reverence in the eyes of man, is now slaughtered for a jest and a sport." Life became a mere drug on the market. The expenditure of money and life is almost beyond belief.
 3. America -
 - a. Playboy sexism calls promiscuity good and biblical sex evil.
 - b. Leftwing politics calls anarchy and nihilism good and governmental structure and restraint evil.
 - c. Liberal judiciaries coddle criminals and scorn citizenship and patriotism.
 - d. Sports, Movies, Drug-addicted Singers, make millions of dollars and are idolized while educators, ministers, and soldiers are ridiculed and paid hardly enough to live.
 - e. Twelve of *People* magazine's "Most Intriguing People of

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1975" Richard Zanuck, producer of the gory "Jaws"; Frank Fitzsimmons, Labor racketeer; Charles Manson, demonic murderer; Cher, sex symbol singer; Teng Hsiao-ping, Communist leader; Patricia Hearst, revolutionary; Christina Onassis, multi-millionaire heiress; Leonard Matlovich, homosexual in Air Force; Rosemary Rogers, authoress of sex novels; Werner Erhard, guru of "est," new groupie therapy; Woody Allen, vulgar comedian; Don King, promoter of Muhammed Ali. NO WONDER OUR SOCIETY IS SICK IF THESE ARE OUR HEROES!

f. Exploitation: *The Hidden Persuaders*, by Vance Packard

- (1) ". . . many of us are being influenced and manipulated, far more than we realize in the patterns of our everyday lives."
- (2) "*Public-relations experts are advising churchmen how they can become more effective manipulators of their congregations.*"
- (3) "One of the main jobs of the advertiser . . . is not so much to sell the product as to give moral permission to have fun without guilt."
- (4) "They (social scientists) now study irrationality . . . to gather data that may be used by salesmen to manipulate consumers."

C. Disillusionment, pessimism, despair, complacency

1. Jews: Isa. 57:1-5; Jer. 9:1-6; Ezek. 13:10; Amos 6:1, 6
2. Rome: We have already documented the disillusionment, pessimism and despair of many of the Roman philosophers and historians.
3. America
 - a. Music - "Alone Again, Naturally." "Is That All There Is?"
 - b. Lit. - Camus says in, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, the only truly significant philosophical question is suicide. Why should I not snuff out my life? Why should I make the effort to go on living.
 - c. Existentialism says meaning is found in meaninglessness—life is a meaningless series of disconnected events.
 - d. Joplin Globe, 11-24-74, art. entitled "Panelists See Modern Man Losing Historical Direction," "Fizzy-haired geneticist James Watson shocked his distinguished audience when he said, 'God is a cop-out.' The message of the past 30 years, he said, is that 'nothing is going to get better.' He also said, 'It would be nice to believe that there is something distantly

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wonderful that keeps everything in line, but there is no reason for it.””

- e. B.F. Skinner, psychologist, says, “Society can no longer afford freedom—control over man’s conduct and culture is essential.”
 - f. Schlesinger’s *Catcher In The Rye*, required reading in many U.S. high schools, is not only vulgar but filled with despair-philosophy.
 - g. Camus, Sartre, Hemingway and other existentialists are popular literary idols of U.S. educational institutions.
- D. OUR SOCIETY IS SICK. IT HAS ALL THE SYMPTOMS. IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO DIAGNOSE THE CAUSES. CAN ANYTHING BE DONE?

III. PRESCRIPTION

- A. Teach (cf. my OBC convention sermon, 2-19-75, *Isaiah, Vol. II*)
 1. We must cease trying to entertain and manipulate people; society cannot be made well by entertainment. Even the church sometimes tries to cure the ills of society by copying the entertainment world.
 2. Paul wrote in I Cor. 15:33 that “evil *homilia* (Greek for, teaching) corrupts good morals.” *Good* teaching will build good morals.
 3. John Stott in his book, *Your Mind Matters*, says, “The battle is always won in the mind. It is by the renewal of our mind that our character and behavior become transformed.”
 4. The Old Testament prophets stressed *teaching, learning* the Word of God above everything, in order to cure their sick society.
 5. Above all else we must teach the world that the deity of Christ, the supernatural revelation of the Scriptures, and the divine origin of the church can be established on reasonable, historical, scientific grounds. That Christianity is a matter of the intellect primarily, not moods and feeling primarily, and not of human origin, **MUST BE THE CHURCH’S BASIC PROGRAM OR THRUST!**
 6. Then we must convince the world of the reality of sin; of the possibility of righteousness and justification by faith; and of the judgment to come.
- B. Love
 1. Not just human love. *Agape*, love that is a matter of the mind, direction of the will. Not just feeling. “

SICK SOCIETY SIGNS OWN DEATH CERTIFICATE

2. This kind of love involves discipline, divine guideline of conduct.
3. It involves facing reality and accepting responsibility.
 - a. This is the kind of love the prophets had for their sick society. IT IS THE KIND OF LOVE JESUS AND HIS APOSTLES HAD!
 - b. (See my sermon, "Love Is A Many Splendored Thing.") See also the book *Reality Therapy*, by William Glasser, pub. Harper & Row.
4. It involves making oneself vulnerable to being hurt and rejected and caring for those who hurt and reject and acting always in their best interests.

Conclusion

I. THESE PARALLELS NEED QUALIFYING

- A. Jews were specially chosen by God's sovereign choice (not because *they* were special) (see Romans 9-11) as a people through whom He might bring the Messiah to the whole world. They were a theocracy, at first, and their political, social and national structure was directly united to their religious constitution. Later it was a monarchy.
- B. The Roman empire was world-wide. It was an imperialistic political system, that is, it conquered and governed the known world of Western civilization and much of Eastern civilization. It was a republic at first, governed by a Senate and administered by an appointed chief executive. Julius Caesar became sole monarch or dictator (emperor) and Rome was ruled by emperors ever after that. It had a state religion.
- C. The U.S. is a republican-democracy. Its legislators are (theoretically) elected by its populace and its chief executives, also elected by the people, appoint other administrators. It is not imperialistic. One of its chief tenets is separation of religion and state.

II. YET THERE ARE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENTS AND SOCIETIES WHICH MUST BE FOLLOWED BY ALL (AND TO WHICH ALMIGHTY GOD HOLDS ALL RESPONSIBLE) OR THEY DESTROY THEMSELVES.

- A. All governments are ordained by God (Rom. 13:1-7; I Pet. 2:13-17)
- B. All government is originated for God's purposes of terror to bad conduct and reward to good conduct (Rom. 13:1-7; I Tim. 2:1-4)
- C. Government is ordained to protect its citizens and to insure their fundamental human rights—but *not to provide* its citizens what they can earn for themselves.

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- D. Governments are to protect the sacredness of life; provide justice for litigations; protect the citizen's right to own private property; and to honor its treaties with other countries (cf. Obadiah 10-14; Amos 1:9).

III. GOVERNMENTS FORFEIT THEIR RIGHT TO EXIST WHEN THEY:

- A. Reject the revealed truth (in the Bible) as to their origin and purpose and let falsehood, irrationality, reversal of values and disillusionment to permeate their society . . . because this brings
- B. Social anarchy, commercial chaos, lawless legions of citizenry
- C. THE LIFE-BLOOD OF ANY SOCIETY IS TO KNOW THE TRUTH, LOVE THE TRUTH AND DO THE TRUTH.

A LIMITED BIBLIOGRAPHY HELPFUL IN THE AREA OF AMERICA'S SICKNESS

1. *The Permissive Society*, by Boris Sokoloff, M.D., pub. Arlington House
2. *Poverty Is Where The Money Is*, by Shirley Scheibla, pub. Arlington House
3. *The Dust of Death*, by Os Guinness, pub. Intervarsity Press
4. *Hang Tough*, by John Bonner, pub. Bethany Fellowship
5. *Despair, A Moment or A Way of Life*, by C. S. Evans, pub. IVP
6. *The Drug Users*, by A.E. Wilder Smith, pub. Shaw
7. *The Untapped Generation*, by David Wilkerson, Zondervan
8. *The World Under God's Law*, by T. R. Ingram, pub. St. Thomas Press
9. *Relativism in Contemporary Christian Ethics*, by Erickson, pub. Baker
10. *Reality Therapy*, by Wm. Glasser, pub. Harper and Row
11. *Teddy Bare*, (an expose of Senator Edward Kennedy's affair at Chappaquiddick) by Zad Rust, pub. Western Islands
12. *Education In America*, by G.C. Roche, III, pub. FEE
13. *Darwin, Before and After*, by Robert E.D. Clark, pub. Moody Press
14. *Christian Counter-Attack*, by A. Lunn and G. Lean, pub. Arlington House
15. *Classroom Countdown*, by Max Rafferty, pub. Hawthorne
16. *The Hidden Persuaders*, by Vance Packard, pub. Pocket Books

ESCHATOLOGY

Non-Biblical and Biblical—A Brief

Introduction

I. DEFINITIONS

- A. Eschatology is from Greek, *eschatos*, lastst, *logia*, knowledge or

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study. New Testament eschatology is generally: a study of last things, i.e., studying what the Bible says about the end of this world and the 2nd Advent of Christ, judgment, etc.

- B. There are many differing eschatological theories in the religious world today. Postmillennialism; Premillennialism; Dispensationalism; Amillennialism; each one of these having different theories.
- C. We are going to deal with the general subject rather than with any specific theory.

II. IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT

A. A man's eschatology inevitably affects his:

1. Hermeneutics
2. Politics
3. Evangelism
4. Fellowship (Unity)
5. And, as a result of the above, his Ethics
6. We shall amplify this later in the study

B. The Bible says a great deal about eschatology

1. The eschatology of the Old Testament ("last things") refers mainly to the last of the Old Testament dispensation and the coming of Christ and the church.
2. The eschatology of the New Testament refers mainly to the Second Coming of Christ.
3. Most New Testament books have references to His Second Coming/Judgment

Discussion

I. ERRONEOUS ESCHATOLOGY

A. The Late Great Planet Earth

1. "The nation of Israel cannot be ignored; we see the Jews as a miracle of history . . . have survived as a distinct race . . . can trace their continuous unity back nearly 4000 years" pg. 45, etc. Answer: Who is a Jew? (Rom. 2:28-29) Who is Israel? (Gal. 6:15-16). Jacob Gartenhaus, president of International Board of Jewish Missions, born in Austria and educated in rabbinical schools there, says: "No Jew today can trace his ancestry back beyond two or three hundred years." *Christianity Today*, 3-13-70.

There are only 3 million people in Israel today and 12% of

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those are Arabs; 3% are Christians. There are more Jews in New York City than in Israel.

The government of Israel today cannot even decide who a legal Jew is. Is Sammy Davis, Jr. a Jew? Will Jerry Lewis take up residence in Israel? Unlikely they will do so willingly!

2. Hal Lindsey predicts the return of the Messiah in 1988. “. . . within forty years or so of 1948, all these things could take place . . .” pg. 54. He says in his booklet, *Homo Sapiens, Extinction or Evacuation*, pg. 20, “You are the generation seeing these things; you are in the generation which is not going to see physical death. I expect one day in my life to be physically called to see the Lord in the air, without seeing death.”
Answer: I would like to have that assurance but I hesitate to jeopardize my credibility with such absolute predictions in view of so many other absolute predictions missed.
3. By 1988 the Jewish Temple and reinstatement of Jewish system of sacrifices will have to be accomplished (pgs. 54-57).
Answer: This contradicts the teachings of Romans, Galatians and Hebrews as to the abrogation of the Jewish system of sacrifices and the finality of the Christian system.
4. In his attempt to make Russia and Egypt the object of Daniel 11 (kings of north and kings of south) he says Cush means “black man” in Hebrew (pg. 13-14 of *Homo Sapiens*). One Hebrew lexicon (Youngs) out of scores of others gives “black” as a meaning of the Hebrew word Cush. All other lexicons give another Hebrew word as the word used for “black.”
Answer: Daniel 11 very evidently refers to the history of the Seleucids to the First Coming of the Messiah.
5. On page 112 Lindsey talks of the False Prophet he says is predicted in Rev. 13:11-18 and thinks the False Prophet will be from the tribe of Dan.
Answer: The 12 tribes of Jews in Revelation 7 which so many think apply to the restored Jews in Israel do not even include the tribe of Dan!
6. On page 139 Lindsey says I Cor. 15:50 teaches that Christians cannot inherit the Kingdom of God in the type of bodies we now have—flesh and blood. However, he says, the gospels and the Old Testament teach there will be certain people who *will* inherit for a time the Kingdom of God in bodies of flesh and blood. And this is going to be the millennial kingdom ruled over by Christ here on earth!
Answer: Does God contradict Himself? Is His Spirit the author of a confusing revelation?

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7. There are *many* more exegetical and hermeneutical errors in this book and his other books. We cannot deal with them all in this study.

B. Seventh Day Adventists ("Signs Of The Times")

1. Following Ussher's chronology William Miller interpreted the 2300 days of Daniel as 2300 years and predicted Christ would return to earth in 1843. That didn't happen so they set Oct. 22, 1844. That didn't happen, so they said Christ passed from one section of heaven to another in 1844 to perform a work known as the "investigative judgment."
2. Their view of the 1000 years of Rev. 20: "During the one thousand years the earth lies desolate; Satan and his angels are confined here; and the saints, with Christ, sit in judgment on the wicked preparatory to their final punishment."

C. Jehovah's Witnesses ("Watchtower")

1. "There is another way that helps confirm the fact that we are living in the final few years of his "time of the end" (Dan. 12:9). The Bible shows that we are nearing the end of a full 6000 years of human history. . . . According to reliable Bible chronology, Adam and Eve were created in 4026 B.C.E.

4026 B.C.E. to 1 B.C.E.	4025 years
1 B.C.E. to 1 C.E.	1 year
1 C.E. to 1968 C.E.	<u>1967 years</u>

Total to autumn 1968 5993 years

2. "This would leave only seven more years from the autumn of 1968 to complete 6000 full years of human history. That seven-year period will evidently finish in the autumn of the year 1975." Quoted from "Awake" dated Oct. 1968.
 3. They predicted Christ came to earth in 1914, *invisibly!*
- C. Oswald J. Smith, in his book, *Is the Antichrist at Hand?*, said:
1. "I have been studying with interest . . . the prophetic writings of . . . diligent students of the Bible. . . . Of all . . . those who have undertaken to work out the chronological forecast, there is not one who sets any date beyond 1934. The earliest suggested by these writers is 1928."
 2. "If our chronology is correct, it means that all these things, including the Great Tribulation, the revival of the Roman Empire, the reign of the Antichrist and the Battle of Armageddon, must take place before the year 1933."

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D. Some Other Date setters:

1. Augustine calculated the end of human history would be about 650 A.D.
2. Then eschatology buffs focused on the year 1000 A.D.
3. Then the Second Coming was predicted for 1044, 1065, and other dates.
4. I.M. Holdeman, pastor, First Baptist Church of New York, said in 1911, “. . . the hour is ripe for the moment when the Lord shall descend and gather His Church to Himself.”
5. W.E. Blackstone, in his book, *Jesus Is Coming*, printed in 1898, said, “. . . His coming, the rapture, is near.”
6. In January, 1963, a well-known Bible teacher in So. California entitled an article “Jesus Will Come in 1968!”
7. On April 17, 1971, the Minneapolis Star carried a Review of a book, *God, History and the End of the World*, in which Kenneth Aune, the author, claims that in March, 1990, will come the battle of Jerusalem, the return of Jesus Christ, and the battle of Armageddon.
8. May 10, 1974—an Israeli tour guide (see *Christian Standard*, Ed. 8-18-1974.

II. EFFECT OF ERRONEOUS ESCHATOLOGY

A. Confusion and Ridicule

1. The non-Christian world looks at the multitude of different predictions
 - a. It scorns and ridicules Christianity and the Bible and the Church because every date set in the past (set by apparently sincerely convinced prophecy scholars) has been wrong!
 - b. It asks, Is there any truth to the Bible at all; if so, which religious group has the truth—they all differ on one of the most important doctrines of the Bible, the end of time.
2. Even Christians are prompted to become disillusioned and suspicious of their Bible teachers when faced with the errors and confusion.

B. Erroneous Hermeneutics and Wrestling the Scriptures

1. The theory of Premillennialism and Dispensationalism asserts that Christ came to earth for the purpose of setting up His kingdom. Quite by surprise, He was rejected by the Jews, however, and established the church instead. When He returns, He will allegedly raise only the righteous dead, after which He will restore national Israel, sit upon David's literal throne in Jerusalem and subsequently reign for 1000_i years. After this, the

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resurrection of the wicked dead and the final judgment are supposed to occur.

2. This violates proper hermeneutics because:
 - a. It reflects upon the integrity of Bible prophecy by implying that the Jewish rejection of Christ was a miscarriage in God's plan. However, the Old Testament clearly foretold that rejection (Isa. 53:1ff.; Jn. 12:37-38; Psa. 118:22-23; Mt. 21:46, etc.).
 - b. It denies plain Bible teaching concerning the establishment of the kingdom in the first century (Dan. 2:44; Isa. 2:2-4; Acts 2:16-17; Col. 1:13; Rev. 1:4, 6, 9).
 - c. It suggests that the church was not a part of God's eternal purpose, but only an interim (parenthesis) emergency measure (Eph. 3:10; Rev. 13:8; Acts 20:28).
 - d. It denies that Christ is now seated on David's throne (Zech. 6:12-13; Heb. 8:1; Lk. 1:32-33; Acts 2:30; Rev. 3:21; I Cor. 10:11).
 - e. It denies that we are in the last days (Acts 2:16-17), and that Christ's next coming will end this world . . . (I Cor. 15:24; Lk. 17:26-30).
 - f. It teaches, contrary to the Bible, that Christ will come again to deal with sin through a Jewish economy (Heb. 9:28).
 - g. It affirms, contrary to Scripture, that there will be two literal resurrections from the dead, 1000 years apart (Jn. 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).
 - h. It denies the *expressed* symbolic nature of the book of Revelation by literalizing its figures (Rev. 1:1; 20:1-6).
 - i. It denies that through the redemptive work of the First Coming of Christ *only*, must Jew and Gentile become "one" (Gal. 3:1ff.; Eph. 2:11-22, etc.).
 - j. It denies that "Zion" of the Old Testament Prophets has its fulfillment in the New Testament church (cf. Heb. 12:22).

C. Unjust Politics

1. Oswald T. Allis in an article in *Christianity Today*, entitled, Israel's Transgression in Palestine, Dec. 24, 1956, made an ethical evaluation of the Zionist/U.N. partitioning of Palestine.
2. The Zionists appeal to Gen. 18:18 to prove the Jews should claim sovereignty of Palestine. **BUT DOES THIS SCRIPTURE GIVE THE ISRAELIS A CLEAR TITLE TO PALESTINE? NO!**
 - a. This promise was conditioned upon obedience. The Jews have disobeyed God from the days of Moses even to the rejection of the Messiah.

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- b. Any restoration of the Jews was conditioned upon repentance (Deut. 30:1-10).
Any return to a Jewish system to seek the Lord would place them in a position "impossible to repent" (cf. Heb. 6 & 10).
- c. The dispersion of the Jews and the taking of their place from them was a punishment from God (Mt. 21:43; 25:2; Lk. 21:24).
- d. Jesus and His apostles predicted the end of the Jewish economy and nationalism (Jn. 4:23; Lk. 4:23-29; Eph. 3:1-13, I Thess. 2:14-16).
- e. There is little spiritual difference between the Jews of America and the Jews of Palestine. A believing Jew is today as near heaven in the U.S., where 5 million of his fellow Israelites now live and apparently expect to continue to live, as if he were in Jerusalem. An unbelieving Jew is just as far from heaven in Jerusalem as he would be in New York or London.
- e. The attempt to restore the Jews to Palestine has proved to be unjust in itself and highly dangerous to the peace of the world. Palestine did not belong to the British. It did not and does not belong to the U.N. The persecution of the Jews by the Nazis and now by the Russians is unjust. But allowing the Jews to take possession of a large part of Palestine and to force hundreds of thousands of Arabs out of it is an equally grievous wrong.

D. Division and Schism

1. Christians may have widely divergent views in regard to the Second Coming of Christ.
2. All views must be submitted to the crucible of proper hermeneutics.
3. But division comes when the particular view is overemphasized to such an extent that it becomes a "test of fellowship."
4. And this continues to be made such a test of fellowship by churches, colleges, and individuals.
5. It also becomes a heresy when it draws people away from the church (Armstrongism, J.W.s, etc.).

E. Evangelism

1. It tends to stifle evangelism because it majors in prophecy dates, charts, signs, etc., and minors in the plan of salvation given in the New Testament.
2. It tends to unethical, scare-tactic, pressure evangelism.
3. Many use the "signs of the times" (the phrase is used only once in the Bible, Mt. 16:3, and referred to His *first* coming, not

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His 2nd) to bring believers into line, and convert hard-case unbelievers.

4. This approach seems to say that what is really important is to be in good shape at that particular point in time when Christ appears about to return. It's the old I-don't-want-to-be-caught-in-there-when-Jesus-returns syndrome. It suggests in a veiled way that the mark we get on our ethical report card is the mark we happen to receive on the pop quiz given at the Parousia rather than the cumulative grade for the entire course.

Jesus said, ". . . occupy till I come" Lk. 19:13. He did not say, "Only be found occupying when I come."

F. Some very extreme views connected with eschatology:

1. "Russia with all of her current satellites and all she might acquire in the future, will not be able to successfully invade Israel. ISRAEL IS INVINCIBLE UNLESS GOD IS VULNERABLE," Maranatha Trumpet.
2. "Christ will not come back to the earth until the Jewish people ask Him to come back. . . . This is the basis of the Second Coming of Christ. . . . Satan knows that once Christ returns his career will be finished . . . He also understands that Christ will not come back until the Jews ask Him to come back. If Satan can succeed in destroying all the Jews before they have a chance to ask Christ to come back, Christ will not come back and Satan will be safe. That is why Satan is in an all-out campaign to destroy the Jews. . . . The power of the Second Coming of Christ is very much in the hands of Israel," *The Chosen People*, May 1975.
3. "This false Messiah will fool the Jews by doing miracles through the devil who will have entered his body in the middle of the 7 years. At this point in time, the Jews will look in the Bible to see if this man comes out of the predicted blood line of David. The Jews will find that this line or family tree ends with Christ (since he was killed and had no children). The Jews will also discover that the prophecies about the true Messiah fit only Christ. When the Jews have finally repented of their misconception about Christ, the world will see the appearance of Jesus Christ in person who will come in power and force to establish a Kingdom of Peace to last 1000 years on this present earth. The Jews will finally have their promised kingdom which in the final analysis, fulfills Old Testament promises to the Jews." An unsigned paper in the author's files.

III. ESSENTIAL ESCHATOLOGY

A. Certainty of His Coming

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1. The most important thing about biblical eschatology is its emphasis on the certainty of the end of this world order, the Coming of Christ, and judgment.
2. *The Coming Judge*, by Seth Wilson, pub. *Christian Standard*, 4-12-58: "He (Jesus) is far more than a prophet in the past. He is a power in the present. And He is the most certain and significant of all the prospects for the future!"
3. There is only one way to be certain Jesus is Coming Again—that is to take His word for it. He promised it and His promises are *authenticated* by His resurrection from the dead.

"The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all men everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given *assurance* to all men by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31).

THE ONLY SIGN FOR ASSURANCE WE NEED THAT HE IS COMING AGAIN IS HIS RESURRECTION. THAT ASSURANCE WILL CALL MEN TO REPENTANCE.

The eyewitnessed, empirically verified, historically authenticated resurrection is *all-sufficient* testimony to His Second Coming. Human predictions about "signs of the times" are subject to all the enigma and vagary of speculation.

4. Jesus promised His return: Matt. 16:27; 24:30b; 24:37-42; 24:43-51; 25:1-13; 25:14-31; 26:64; Lk. 17:26-30; 19:11-27.
5. The angels promised His Return: Acts 1:11.
6. The apostles promised His Return: I Thess. 4:16; Acts 3:20-21; I Pet. 1:7; 5:4; II Pet. 3:3-4; James 5:7; Heb. 9:28; I Jn. 2:28; Rev. 1:7; I Cor. 1:7; 4:5; 11:26; 15:23; Phil. 3:20-21; Col. 3:4; I Thess. 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:16-18; 5:1-4, 23; II Thess. 1:7-10; 2:1-8; I Tim. 6:14-15; II Tim. 4:1-8; Titus 2:13.

B. The Time of His Coming

1. "But of that day and hour *no man knows*, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only" (Mt. 24:36; Mk. 10:32-33). THE TRUTH OF THAT STATEMENT HAS ALREADY BEEN VERIFIED BY THE SPECULATORS OF THE PAST WHO WERE SURE THEY KNEW FROM THE "SIGNS OF THEIR TIMES."
2. He will Come "as a thief in the night" (I Thess. 5:2-3; Mt. 24:27-51; 25:1-13; II Pet. 3:6-10). There will be no preliminary announcements ahead of His coming! He will come unexpectedly—suddenly!
3. *No one will miss knowing* when He comes—there will be *no secret* coming or rapture. The next time Jesus comes it will be with a shout and trumpet blast to be heard by all^l the living and the dead

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—every eye shall see Him (cf. Mt. 24:26-31; I Cor. 15:52; I Thess. 4:16).

4. THE EMPHASIS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IS THE NEED TO *BE READY AT ALL TIMES!* Setting dates; making lists of “signs of the end”; speculative and divisive dogmas devitalize and weaken this readiness!
5. He is Coming when people will be doing the normal things of life, “eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage” (Mt. 24:37-38).
6. There will be no abnormal, extra-ordinary “signs” pointing to His “soon” coming. “The Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (Mt. 24:44).

C. Particulars Concerning His Coming

1. Seth Wilson, *ibid*: “The Lord has revealed only a few particulars . . . of the great events which will take place when He comes. No doubt there are many things in store for us that we have not been told because we could not grasp and appreciate them now. Very likely some of the things predicted will not happen as we imagine them.”
2. The dead will be raised (I Thess. 4:16; Jn. 5:28-29).
3. Those alive will be changed into bodies fitting them for their eternal destiny (Phil. 3:21; I Cor. 15:52-54; Rom. 8:23-25).
4. The redeemed will (the resurrected and changed—all together) be with the Lord (I Thess. 4:17).
5. The world and its carnal works will be burned up, melted, (II Pet. 3:11-13).
6. A crown of glory will be given to the faithful (II Tim. 4:8; I Pet. 5:4).
7. Christ, with His angels, will execute judgment upon all men (II Tim. 4:1; Jude 14-15; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Jn. 5:22-29; II Cor. 5:10, etc.).
8. Many will be rejected who thought they were saved (Mt. 7:21-23; 22:13-14; Lk. 13:25-27, etc.).
9. The opportunity for salvation will be forever closed (Lk. 13:25-28).
10. There will be grief and terror in the hearts of many because they are unprepared to meet Him (Mt. 24:30, 50, 51; 25:30, etc.).

IV. EFFECT OF ESSENTIAL ESCHATOLOGY

A. Purity of Living

1. “Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,

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waiting . . . for the coming of the day of God . . ." II Pet. 3:11-12.

2. ". . . we know that when he appears we shall be like him, . . . and every one who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure" (I Jn. 3:2-3).
3. MORE EMPHASIS ON THE CERTAINTY OF HIS COMING AND ON THE IMMINENT URGENCY OF IT (DAILY, HOURLY URGENCY) WOULD PROMOTE MORE GODLINESS THAN ALL THE PROMOTIONAL GIMMICKS AND ENTERTAINMENT SESSIONS OF ALL THE CHURCHES PUT TOGETHER!
4. *More* sermons are needed on Judgment, The End of the World, The Second Coming.

B. Encouragement For Endurance of Trials and Tests

1. ". . . we who are alive . . . shall be caught up together . . . to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord. . . . Therefore comfort one another with these words" (I Thess. 4:17-18).
2. "But rejoice in so far as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed" (I Pet. 4:13).
3. CHRISTIANS WHO TRUST THAT CHRIST IS COMING AGAIN TO RIGHT ALL WRONGS, TO VINDICATE ALL COMMITMENTS, TO JUDGE ALL SECRETS. . . . TAKE COURAGE AND ENDURE, CONFIDENT THAT CHRIST WILL VINDICATE THEM *PERFECTLY!*

C. Evangelism

1. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body. Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men . . ." II Cor. 5:10-11.

THE REMAINDER OF THAT CHAPTER SPEAKS OF BEING AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST.

2. "He has commanded all men everywhere to repent, in that he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world. . . ." Acts 17:31.
3. JESUS MAY COME TODAY! WE MUST PREACH THE WORD WITH ALL URGENCY IN SEASON AND OUT OF SEASON. EVERY MAN AND WOMAN MUST AT LEAST HEAR AND BE GIVEN OPPORTUNITY TO RESPOND!
4. "It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, *each with his work*. . . ." Mk. 13:34. "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time?"

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Blessed is that servant whom his master *when he comes shall find so doing*" Mt. 24:45-46.

D. Contemporaneity

1. Michael Green in an article in *Christianity Today*, 1-1-65 says: "I believe that in this biblical doctrine of the Christian hope (the Second Coming) we have an intelligible answer to the modern quest for purpose in the world."
2. Quest for Personal Identity: Man is in quest of personal identity. What is he worth? What does he matter? What is his destiny? That God is Coming Again in His Son to consummate His great redemptive work for *man* (the end of God's whole cosmic scheme) in a *personal* appearance is a message that is relevant in our depersonalized age!
3. Quest for Realism: Man is skeptical in our age of any theory of regeneration or redemption of society or the cosmos which is unsupported by hard facts.
Is the Christian doctrine of a returning, redeeming Christ realistic in the 20th century? . . . Is the Christian optimism that "all will be well in the end" justifiable? Or is it a fantasy, a fairy tale like all the schemes of men?
4. The Christ who came and who will come, just because of this, IS COMING TO US DAY BY DAY, CHALLENGING US CONSTANTLY FOR AN ENTRANCE INTO OUR LIVES . . . SEEKING OUR FELLOWSHIP!
5. God's purpose is to demonstrate NOW, in this world, this transitory world, the beauty, power, holiness, and permanence of the age to come. He who has called us out of this world is Holy. He who will come for us is Holy. In the meantime, He has given us His Holy Spirit to work out in our lives something of the character of the age to come.

Conclusion

- I. ERRONEOUS ESCHATOLOGY BRINGS REPROACH UPON GOD'S WORD AND HIS CHURCH: IT CREATES DIVISION: IT DISCOURAGES: IT HINDERS PRODUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY.
- II. ESSENTIAL ESCHATOLOGY DOES NOT CREATE DIVISION: PROMOTES PURITY OF LIVING: GIVES ENCOURAGEMENT: URGES EVANGELISM: FILLS THE NEEDS OF CONTEMPORARY MAN.
- III. THE LORD DOES WANT US TO KNOW SOME THINGS ABOUT THE FUTURE. He wants us to know that Christ is coming personally to this world of time and space again just as certainly as He came forth from the dead in a time-space event.

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He wants us to know there is a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory beyond this world which will be destroyed completely.

Therefore let us be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord . . . for we know our labor is not in vain in the Lord.

A LIMITED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BOOKS AND ARTICLES HELPFUL IN THE AREA OF ESCHATOLOGY

Books

1. *Prophecy And The Church*, by Oswald T. Allis, The Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co. (deals with Dispensationalism)
2. *The Time Is At Hand*, by Jay Adams, The Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co. (a commentary on Revelation proposing "Realized Millennialism")
3. *Worthy Is The Lamb*, by Ray Summers, Broadman Pub. (a commentary on Revelation from amillennial viewpoint)
4. *The Meaning and Message of The Book of Revelation*, by E.A. McDowell, Broadman Pub. (a commentary on Revelation - amillennial)
5. *Jeremiah—Lamentations*, by James E. Smith, College Press, pub. (esp. Special Study entitled "Jehovah's Witnesses and the Seventy Years Prophecy.") (a commentary)
6. *Thinking Through Thessalonians*, by Wilbur Fields, College Press, pub. (see all the Special Studies in this book) (a commentary)
7. *God's Prophetic Word*, by Foy E. Wallace, Jr., Gospel Advocate, pub. Out of print. (a series of lectures on dispensationalism)
8. *Prophecy & Premillennialism*, by James D. Bales, Bales, pub. (studies on New Testament fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies)
9. *Millennial Studies*, by George L. Murray, pub. Baker (an excellent refutation of basic errors of premillennialism)
10. *Daniel*, by Paul T. Butler, College Press, pub. (a commentary)
11. *Minor Prophets*, by Paul T. Butler, College Press, pub. (a commentary - see esp. Introductory section)
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2. *Signs Of Confusion*, by Earl D. Radmacher, Moody Monthly, May 1974

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3. *Why Eternity Must Follow the Second Advent*, by Wick Broomall, Christian News, not dated
4. *The Coming Judge*, by Seth Wilson, Christian Standard, 4-12-58
5. *When Is Jesus Coming Again?*, by Seth Wilson, Lookout, 3-11-56
6. *Outlines of Matthew 24 and 25*, by Paul T. Butler, 3-8-81/3-15-81, Xerox
7. *A Secret Rapture Considered*, by Seth Wilson, OBC Compass, Oct. 1973

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Acts 20:28-32

by Paul T. Butler - OBC Convention 1978

Introduction

- I. There are both true and false prophets in the first century church.
 - A. The New Testament is replete with instructions and warnings about those who are to be listened to and not listened to.
 - B. The most frightening aspect of New Testament teaching on prophecy is that the false prophets will arise from *within the brotherhood of believers!* (Acts 20:30)
- II. There was a special charismatic gift of prophecy given to some in the first century church.
 - A. That was given only by the laying on of the hands of the apostles (see lesson from OBC Convention 1978 on Paul's Power To Give Charismatic Power).
 - B. This ceased (and was intended to cease) when the perfected church arrived (see lesson from OBC Convention 1977 on Gifts, Miracles, by Butler), or when the apostles died.
- III. So, we will look at the phenomena of Modern Prophecy from those two conclusions.
 - A. Even when there were true prophets, not all who claimed to be prophets were to be followed . . . and
 - B. The New Testament indicates the miraculous gift of prophecy was to cease with the apostles deaths, (cf. Eph. 4:13; I Cor. 13:1-13).

Discussion

- I. Who are the Modern prophets and what are they prophesying?
 - A. Ever since the end of the apostolic age self-appointed prophets have been predicting and revealing messages from God (so they say).

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1. No two of them seem to agree on interpreting events or times.
 2. Hardly any of them agree doctrinally (except on charismatic gifts for today).
 3. There are hundreds of them just in the Midwest—let alone the other hundreds all over the world.
 4. I will deal with just a few because they are basically all alike—false!
- B. Salem Kirban, author of *Guide to Survival*, and other books and films
1. Rapture must occur 7 years before 2000 A.D., but there is a 4-year error in our calendar, therefore the Rapture is to be in 1989 and the Millennium begins in 1996 (after the “rapture” and 7 years tribulation).
 2. Then Mr. Kirban states, “However, nowhere in God’s word does He tell us the exact date . . . for the Rapture.”
- C. David Webber, Pastor of Southwest Radio Church, Oklahoma City, Okla. and publisher of The Gospel Truth
1. Refers to George Orwell’s *1984* for the prediction that by that date a world dictator would control all nations; refers to Hal Lindsey’s book and to movies with “apocalyptic warnings” like *The Birds*, *Earthquake*, *The Omen* which “testify to these things which are soon coming upon the earth.”
 2. Mr. Webber says, “Scripture indicates ministers and pastors who refuse to investigate the signs of the time leading to Christ’s return, and warn the unsaved to prepare, are ignorant, hypocrites, and false prophets (Mt. 16:3; II Pet. 3:3-5).”
 3. Mr. Webber’s time table is: 1974-78 Jewish temple rebuilt; 1981-85 Beginning of the Tribulation; Beginning of the Kingdom age 1997-2001.
- C. American Board of Missions to The Jews, Inc.
1. How the Jews are related to the ending of the Tribulation Period. “Christ will not come back to the earth until the Jewish people ask Him to come back . . . (quoting Hos. 5:15) . . . Christ will not return to the earth until the Jewish people ask Him to come back. . . . This is the basis of the Second Coming of Christ.”
 2. “Satan . . . knows that once Christ returns his career will be finished. He also understands that Christ will not come back until the Jews ask Him to come back. If Satan can succeed in destroying all the Jews before they have a chance to ask Christ to come back, Christ will not come back and Satan will be safe. That is why Satan is in an all-out campaign to destroy the Jews.”

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3. "The power of the Second Coming of Christ is very much in the hands of Israel." From *The Chosen People* magazine, May 1975.
- D. Oswald J. Smith, Pastor of the Alliance Tabernacle, Toronto, Canada, wrote a book in the 1920's, *Is the Antichrist At Hand?*
1. Jerusalem destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 B.C.;
 2. Times of the Gentiles 2520 years;
 3. Jerusalem and Palestine promised to Jews by Balfour, 1917;
 4. Great Tribulation, Revival of Roman Empire, Reign of Antichrist, Battle of Armageddon must take place before the year 1933!
- E. Morris Cerullo, World Evangelism, San Diego, Calif. (produced the T. V. program "Masada")
1. Ezekiel's prophecy of the "dry bones" predicted the Nazi slaughter of 6 million Jews, and the survival of modern Israel.
 2. This is the "beginning" "the exact summer season."
 3. The "generation" that sees the birth of the nation of Israel . . . is in the "summer season" (he cites Lk. 21:29-33).
 4. "I tell you, I would not trade places with Moses, with Elijah, with any of the apostles. I would rather be alive today. This is the greatest moment of history, when the trumpet of God will sound, and your Lord and mine will come. . . ."
 5. "When I was only 15 years old . . . God dealt with me in a vision in which I was caught up into the heavens and I stood as close to the glory of God as when Moses spoke face to face with Him. . . . the brightness of His glory moved from the place where He had stood, there were two holes in the shape of footprints left in the heaven through which I could see countless thousands of people going to hell without Christ . . . In the vision I moved to stand in these open footprints . . . and my feet fit exactly where His had been . . . I knew that God had called me to go to the multitudes of this world with the message of salvation. . . ."
- F. Dr. Charles Taylor, Redondo Beach, Calif., author of *Get All Excited, Jesus is Coming Soon.*
1. First predicted the Rapture in 1975
 2. Then changed, saying, 1948 Israel established
 3. Makes "this generation" (Mt. 24:34) point of reference; a generation in the Bible is 35 years according to Job 42:16
 4. Thus the Rapture will be Sept. 25th, 1976 (Feast of Trumpets and a Sabbath day)
 5. Millennium is to begin in 1983

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G. Joel Darby, Book Fellowship Tract, (Tract entitled, *Why All the Vultures*; sent out by A.B. MacReynolds) (alleged to fulfill Ezek. ch. 38-39)

1. A new breed of vultures has appeared in Israel, a breed never seen before.
2. They are multiplying at 3 times the normal rate in Israel.
3. This is a sign of the end time, writes a former Rabbi Michael Esses, in his new book, *Next Visitor to Planet Earth*, pub. Logos, Plainfield, N.J.
4. Whereas these "buzzards" normally lay one egg at a time, they are now laying FOUR!
5. According to Reuters News Agency, Russia has bought large quantities of powerful archery equipment from the British, also draught horses from all over the world.
6. At any rate the amazing multiplication of the buzzard population right now should warn any careless Christian to get busy and work. . . . God would not be off on His timing. . . . He would not provide for the vastly increased buzzard population NOW if the need for them was 10 or 20 years hence!

H. Hal Lindsey

1. In his booklet, *Homo Sapiens, Extinction of Evacuation*, pgs. 20 ". . . within 40 years or so of 1948, all these things could take place . . ." pg. 54 ". . . You are the generation seeing these things; you are the generation which is not going to see physical death." "I expect one day in my life to be physically called to see the Lord in the air, without seeing death."
2. Lindsey has predicted 1988 for the Rapture.
3. There are a number of historical and exegetical errors in Mr. Lindsey's book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*.

I. Christian church people

1. Christian Standard, March 15, 1969, art. entitled "Crisis In The Middle East."
 - a. Applies Daniel's prophecies in ch. 11 to the Second Coming of Christ, suggesting that Armageddon may be within "the near future."
 - b. Applies Ezekiel 38-39 to return of the Jews to Palestine now and the immediate future.
2. At a widely attended men's clinic in the late 1950's a college professor's prediction of Communist terror "Within 4 years we'll all be dead or wish to God we were!" was proclaimed.
3. *The Exhorter*, a publication of Churches of Christ, Hammond, La. "With the amazing acceleration of human history in the

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last few years, we would expect to see the fulfillment of these prophecies (Zech. 14; as applied to Israel's return to Palestine, etc.) in a very short space of time." date of paper, January 1969

3. A Christian church paper, Dec. 11, 1972

"... Russia with all of her current satellites and all she might acquire in the future, will not be able to successfully invade Israel. *ISRAEL IS INVINCIBLE UNLESS GOD IS VULNERABLE.*"

This is just a drop in the bucket: Billy Graham, David Wilkerson, Oral Roberts, Richard DeHahn, Pastor Pack, Bill Bright, Rev. Moon, Armstrongites, J.W.s, 7th Day Adventists, Mormons, on and on they go, disagreeing both in prophecies and doctrines.

MILLIONS OF PEOPLE GIVE MILLIONS AND BILLIONS OF DOLLARS TO PROMOTE PEOPLE WHOSE MAIN EFFORTS ARE SPENT PREACHING SUCH USELESS VERBIAGE.

II. Why are they prophesying thus?

- A. There are some who mistakenly think such a *literal* view of the Old Testament Prophets and Revelation is equal to fundamentalism.

1. "If we believe the Bible as the infallible and inspired Word of God, then we must also believe that God has set a day before the literal return of Christ to the earth in which everyone will have to worship the Antichrist as God in order to get their code and number." from *The Midnight Cry*, pub. by Dr. Wm. F. Beirnes, Shoals, Indiana
2. "Numerous passages in the Bible predict the return of Israel to the land. It is difficult to find any doctrines taught more clearly or emphatically in God's word. Yet, many people have failed to accept this truth. They have either ignored these passages, or said that they were fulfilled in the return of the Jewish captivity from Babylon, or that they were figuratively fulfilled in the church." from *The Exhorter*, already cited
3. "He (God) made a covenant with Abraham, promising a large portion of the Middle East . . . for him and his descendants. The covenant is unconditional . . . and we, knowing Him who made the promise, totally support the people and land of Israel in their God-given, God-promised, God-ordained right to exist. Any person or group of nations opposed to this right isn't just fighting Israel, but God and time itself." in the *New York Times*, over the name of the American Board of Missions to the Jews, supported by 48 named churches.

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- B. Fascination with and psychological need for knowing the unknown
1. This has been true of people ever since the garden of Eden.
 2. It was a problem with the first century church (Thessalonians, Corinthians, etc.).
 3. Martin Gardner, reviewer of *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, says, "Long having lost faith in science and politics, millions of Americans are now longing for a mystical breakthrough from the skies which will usher in the Age of Aquarius."
 4. Many people are looking for God to solve the problems of the Christian who has to face an ungodly world by supernatural intervention rather than through hard, faithful discipleship.
 - a. Fascination with all these details of so-called Bible prophecies relieves people from the hard things in Christianity.
 - b. If we can believe that the main thrust of God's redemptive program is going to deal with circumstances (land, armies, temples, etc.) we may hope in that as His ultimate program.
 - c. BUT THE MAIN THRUST OF GOD'S REDEPTIVE PROGRAM IS THE CHANGING OF THE NATURE OF THE INDIVIDUAL.
 5. The essential elements of all the dispensational, pre-millennial systems may be found in the Jewish Apocryphal writings.
 6. The New Testament plainly tells us we do not need to know times or seasons which God has set in His own authority (2nd Coming, etc.). We do not need to know what type of resurrection body we will have. There are many things we do not need to know. . . .
 7. C.S. Lovett, *Personal Christianity*, Baldwin Park, Calif., "The Holy Spirit has given us a unique method for unlocking the deeper truths. If, for example, you were reading *Lovett's Lights On Thessalonians*, the books that offer Paul's comments on antichrist and the rapture of the church (which I strongly believe in), *you'd find your imagination set on fire. . . .*"
- C. Instant Evangelism
1. "The signs of our time indicate the days of this age are winding down, and God does not want us to be ignorant when the day of Christ's return is at hand. . . . We must be about the Father's business, urging the lost to be saved . . . before that terrible day of darkness falls upon the earth." from the *Midnight Cry* already cited.
 2. "Unlike other missions, Jewish missions is not merely evangelistic. The purpose of missions in general is to evangelize and disciple. But Jewish missions is more so. Not only does Jewish

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missions seek to evangelize . . . it is also a prophetic ministry. . . ." *The Chosen People*, already cited.

3. Hal Lindsey's books appeal for urgent evangelism because "the time is short. . . ."
4. In some way or another, these prophets seem to think they can by-pass the plain urgings of Jesus to insist that people count the cost, that Christian discipleship should be based on conviction, not emotion.

They think that all these "count-downs" and "horror pictures" will persuade people to repent.

Revelation 9:20ff. plainly says that all the terrible things symbolized by the Trumpets (judgments upon the Roman empire) did not cause the rest of mankind to repent!

5. I was in a Christian Service Camp a few years ago (Guadalupe, N.M.) and a preacher was showing his slides of the Holy Land and preaching on the Rapture, etc., and five or six young people became so upset they started crying and making long distance phone calls to make sure their parents were home.

D. Zionism is politically chic!

1. Some people consider it a test of your relationship to Christ that you believe the Jews have a biblical right to Palestine.
2. We have already cited the quotation in II. A. 4.
3. *Time* magazine continually prints editorials and articles on the Jews returning to Palestine "Thus Judaism . . . and Israel have a commanding moral claim to Jerusalem. . . ." *Time* 12-27-71.
4. U.S. Presidents from Truman to Carter have been forced by powerful Jewish opinion to politically support something that although politically expedient, was actually unethical! Oswald T. Allis, "Israel's Transgression in Palestine," *Christianity Today*, Dec. 24, 1956
4. What really upsets me is the fact that most of our U.S. congressmen blasted their own countrymen for trying to protect the sovereign land of S. Vietnam against invasion by N. Vietnam (agreed to by treaty), and on the other hand acclaimed the U.N. partitioning of Palestine in 1948 to the Jews, forcing Palestinians out, as right.

E. Ego-trip, fame, gather a following (III John 9).

1. The scriptures indicate this as a motive for false teachers and false prophets.
". . . from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them . . ." (Acts 20:30).

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2. The indication in I Corinthians 12-14 is that people were even using *bona fide* gifts of tongues and prophecy for ego-trips.
3. There are thousands and thousands of "itching-eared" people who do not want to endure sound doctrine and accumulate to themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths; II Tim. 4:1-5. THERE ARE EGO-HUNGRY PREACHERS WILLING TO EXPLOIT THESE ITCHING EARED PEOPLED TO MAKE LUCRATIVE LIVINGS AT IT!
4. Even the *People Of God*, led by Moses David, use modern prophetism to recruit and obtain members and money, Bicentennial Issue of *Que Sera, Sera* (would you help us with a donation, please!).

F. Money

1. One example; many others might be cited
2. Rex Humbard's Archives of Faith for Sinners

In anticipation of the *soon* coming of Christ, the rapture and the seven years of Great tribulation (during which it will not be easy for those who are left).

After Humbard and all other saved Christians have been raptured only unrepentant sinners will remain on earth.

Mr. Humbard will be on video tapes to tell them how to reach salvation. Just push a button, and he'll be there.

The right to record a personal testimony to a maximum length of four handwritten pages is now being offered to anyone for a donation of \$100. These microfilmed testimonies will represent a reservoir of faith for those left behind. At the archives there will be a film explaining what has happened with the rapture, etc. The first one to record a personal testimony will be Johnny Cash . . . he will not have to pay the \$100 because he has contributed liberally in the past.

The date of the rapture, according to Humbard, is uncertain, but all those who have been born again know we are on the verge of the Lord's return. While it is true that no one knows the day or the hour, there is something on the inside of each believer that tells him the Lord is soon to return.

Mr. Humbard emphasized that the inclusion of names or testimonies in the archives was not a guarantee of salvation. . . . "We're just fixing to memorialize some people who help us do the job."

3. Of course, the recent expose of the Armstrong fortunes reminds us that they got it from majoring in this kind of modern-day prophetism.

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Granted, not all those who think they are prophets today are Christians or ego-maniacs. Some of them probably would not even claim to be prophets but merely interpreters of Bible prophecies. This may be another subject for study altogether—however, it is interesting that practically all those who have claimed to receive revelations and prophecy, and those who give literal dispensational-pre-millennial interpretations to Bible prophecies AGREE on current events of history!

“And God told me to tell my partners that the moment they hear me say \$77 or \$777 or multiples, of 7’s, to act upon it quickly” Oral Roberts, *Abundant Life*, January 1978.

III. What God Says about Prophets

A. Biblical tests of a True Prophet

1. They speak ONLY in the name of God or Christ, Deut. 13:1-5; 18:20.
 - a. False prophets may pretend to predict the future or work pseudo-signs (Deut. 13).
 - b. Satan can do pseudo-signs (II Thess. 2:9; Rev. 13:13-15).
 - c. God may allow a prophet to be self-deceived and to deceive sinful people as punishment (Ezek. 14:9-11).
 - d. This is not the *only* test because a false prophet may pretend to speak in the name of the Lord (Jer. 29:8-9).
 - e. *In the name of*, means, *by the authority of*.
 - f. We have not only the right but the obligation to challenge every alleged prophecy or prophet with the proposition that the ONLY AUTHORITATIVE WORD FROM GOD FROM NOW UNTIL THE END OF TIME IS CONTAINED IN THE 66 BOOKS OF OUR BIBLE!
 - g. Even authentic prophets can be deceived! (I Kings 13).
2. They speak ONLY by revelation or inspiration.
 - a. If a prophet of biblical times practiced augury, sorcery, divination, they were rejected as false (Deut. 18:9-14).
 - b. Heathen magical practices were not practiced by true prophets of God.
 - c. Deceivers who prophesy lie (Ezek. 12:24; 22:28; Jer. 14:14; Micah 3:7, 11); they speak their *own heart*, not God’s revelation (Jer. 23:16, 26; Ezek. 13:2).
 - d. True prophets receive *direct* revelations from Jehovah (Num. 12:6).
 - e. False prophets may claim visions and dreams (Deut. 13:1-5; I Kings 22:13-28; Ezek. 14:9-11).
 - f. Modern day prophets appeal to soothsayers like Jeanne Dixon; scientists; military prognosticators; even to *Reader’s Digest* and current events to validate their prophecies.

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Examples:

The Midnight Cry (already cited): "The November 1976 *Reader's Digest* carries an interesting story related to our subject entitled "Coming Soon Electronic Money."

"This (cashless society) is what both the Bible predicts and financial experts now affirm."

The Gospel Truth (already cited): "George Orwell in his book, *1984*, predicted that by this date a world dictator would control all nations. Mr. Orwell may be proven to be a prophet with honor in this respect. . . . "Financial experts predict that by 1980 . . . etc.; "A news release this past month stated . . . etc.; "President Valery Giscard D'Estaing of France said . . . etc.; "Henry Kissinger said . . . etc.; ". . . it was the consensus of scientists who worked there (Kennedy Space Center) that if man did not destroy himself by the year 2000 . . . etc."

Personal Christianity, VI, 17, No. 6, June 1977, C.S. Lovett: "Anti-christ is in the world this moment! Who says so? Jeanne Dixon, the well known Catholic soothsayer. She claims he will surface in the early 1980s. But do we consider her a true oracle of God? No way! Not all of her predictions come true. Nevertheless she has quite a record of accurate predictions when it comes to world rulers, such as. . . ."

3. They were conscious of a definite call—they could not mistake it!

a. Moses (Ex. 4:10-12; Jer. 1:4-10; Amos 7:4-15).

b. Samuel (I Sam. 3:19-20).

c. Mrs. Oral Roberts, explaining God's calling her to:

" . . . Lord . . . I'd like to hear Your voice as Oral does. . . . So as I walked I prayed in the Spirit at length. I couldn't understand the prayer language coming over my tongue. It sounded Oriental to me . . . and the interpretation came back in my own language one line at a time. . . ."

"No, you will not hear My voice as others do. . . . I speak to him (Oral) in an audible voice but I will not speak to you audibly. . . . I will speak to you out of the everydayness of your life. . . ." (*Abundant Life*, Jan. 1978).

d. Morris Cerullo: "Theresa (his wife) excused herself to tend to some sewing but was soon fast asleep on the couch. When I noticed that she had fallen asleep, I thought, Now that's strange! We just woke up from a good night's sleep!

I soon realized that God had placed that sleep upon her, . . . so that He might prepare the way for the supernatural visitation of His presence right there in my kitchen. . . . Then God spoke to me. . . ."

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“ . . . while I was in the back of a bus coming from a crusade . . . God had spoken to my heart . . . so forceful was God’s visitation to me on that occasion, that I left the other members of the team and went to the very back of the bus and let God speak to my heart. . . .”

It is strange that all modern day prophets get their “calls” from God when no one else can verify it!

4. True prophets did not seek the office, they were chosen by God and spoke by divine compulsion.
 - a. Many of them resisted (Jer. 1:4-19) (Ex. 3:10-12)
Ezek. 3:12-15; Jonah 1:1-3
 - b. Even when Paul told the Corinthians, “desire the spiritual gifts” he also told them that the Holy Spirit distributed His gifts (miraculous) according to His will . . . and not according to the wishes of men.
5. The commission of the true prophet was authenticated by signs or miracles.
 - a. Ex. 4:1-21 . . . Moses
 - b. Joshua 3:7-13 . . . Joshua
 - c. I Sam. 12:16ff.
 - d. Miracles of Elijah and Elisha
 - e. Paul, Peter, and those upon whom they laid their hands
 - f. Signs and miracles may be copied or faked by false prophets, Deut. 13:1-5; Ex. 7:8-13; 7:20-22; 8:7; Mt. 24:24; Mk. 13:22; II Thess. 2:9.
6. The message of the true prophet was always in harmony with the whole will of God which had been revealed up to that time.
 - a. Deut. 13:1-3 - could not contradict previous truth
 - b. I Kings 13 - true prophet would not have been deceived by old prophet if he had used this test.
 - c. Jer. 26 - leaders were going to kill Jeremiah because he predicted destruction of Jerusalem. Some elders remembered Micah years before predicted the same and Jeremiah was spared.
 - d. I John 4:1-6
 - f. This harmony with revealed truth applies to all the doctrines of the Bible . . . not just predicted history.
 - g. Modern day prophets for the most part do not teach the full apostolic doctrine.

Billy Graham, for example, who interprets biblical prophecy and declares he is God’s spokesman, said, “I used to believe that pagans in far-off

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countries were lost—were going to hell—if they did not have the Gospel of Jesus Christ preached to them. I no longer believe that. . . . I believe that there are other ways of recognizing the existence of God—through nature, for instance—and plenty of other opportunities, therefore, of saying ‘yes’ to God.”

“Graham once believed that Jews, too, were lost if they did not convert to Christianity. . . . Today Graham is willing to leave that up to God. . . .”

“I’ve found that my beliefs are essentially the same as those of orthodox Roman Catholics. . . . We differ on some matters of later church tradition.”
McCalls magazine, January 1978

7. The message of the true prophet and the prophet himself was authenticated by historical fulfillments of his prophecies.
 - a. Deut. 18:21-22
 - b. Jer. 28:17
 8. The moral character of the prophet and his prophecies must agree with God’s full revelation.
 - a. False prophets tend to be ungodly and preach ungodly (both morally and theologically).
 - b. Jer. 23:10-17
 - c. Matt. 7:15-20; II Pet. 2:1-22; Jude 1-23
- B. We do not need modern day prophecies and prophets!**
1. There is enough prophecy in the Bible, fulfilled in minute detail (Daniel, Isaiah, Revelation) to show that God is in control of history!
 2. We do not need, beyond what is revealed in the Bible, to know future circumstances—because knowing the future of earthly history has nothing to do with our covenant relationship to God (I Jn. 3:1-3).

It is not circumstances that save or destroy, it is faith or lack of faith—regardless of circumstances.
 3. The Bible is all sufficient
 - a. “And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).
 - b. “All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (II Tim. 3:16-17).
- C. Modern day prophets need to take warning from Jeremiah, ch. 23 and Ezekiel, ch. 13.**

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Excerpt from a Workshop on the Second Coming of Christ for the NACC, July 14, 1978, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

ZIONISM (Restoration of a Jewish nation in the land of Palestine) Modern Zionism strictly political; never intended to exclude Palestinians (Enc. Brit. "Zionism").

A. Some little known historical facts about Zionism and modern Jews

1. Theodor Herzl, founder of political Zionism, was schizoid, given to frequent fits of melancholy and depression and threatened suicide several times. He spent vast sums of money bribing Turkish officials in order to gain the Sultan's approval of a Jewish settlement in Palestine.

Pauline, his first child, became a drug addict, had several men who left her, wound up overdosing and dying of drugs, at 40.

Hans, his son was manic depressive, treated by Freud who diagnosed an extreme Oedipus complex. Committed suicide on the day of Pauline's funeral.

Trude, married and became a mental case, her marriage broke down and she died after being an inmate of a number of mental institutions. . . . *The Hebrew Christian*, Winter, 1977, Vol. L, No. 4.

2. What about the Falashas? 50,000 black, East Central Africans who have practiced Judaism since 600 B.C., and who claim to be descendants of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. They observe all Jewish rites, sacrifices, and festivals except Hanukkah. . . . *Christianity Today*, 12-7-73, "Black Jews: A House Divided," pg. 52.
3. Most East-European "Jews" (Poles, Hungarian, Czech, etc.) are not really descendants of Israelites, but descendants of the Khazars, Caucasians who became converts or proselytes to Judaism about 900-1000 A.D. The Khazars were "Gentiles" from south Russia! . . . *The Thirteenth Tribe*, by Arthur Koestler, Random House pub., (so well documented and important a book it was reviewed by *Wall Street Journal*)
4. No Jew today can trace his ancestry back beyond two or three hundred years. So how do we know for sure that they are really Jews (true Israelites according to the Old Testament and from the 12 tribes)? . . . *Christianity Today*, 3-13-70, Jacob Gartenhaus, "The Jewish Conception of the Messiah." (He was born in Austria and educated in rabbinical schools there.)
5. CBS, "Sixty Minutes" program, 4-10;77:

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- a. As many people are leaving Israel to come to the U.S. as are going into Israel to live each day.
 - b. There are over 2,000,000 Jews in New York City and many have come there recently from Israel.
 - c. Some Jews who have lived in Israel from its very beginning in 1948 have recently come to the U.S.
 - d. A taxi-driver in New York, who couldn't make a living in Israel, has made over \$100,000 in three years since coming to New York.
 - e. Why are they leaving? 30 years of War; no exemptions from army service; not enough space; inflation rate over 35%; strikes; bureaucracy; takes five year wait to get a telephone; corruption in government; income tax takes 65% of wage earner's living.
 - f. 1/10 of all Israeli citizens live outside the country.
6. The present Israeli government has made it unlawful to do Christian evangelism in that land. How will the millennium ever come about?
- B. Zionism and the Bible
1. Repentance and obedience to God's commandments and prophecies was the *condition* upon which God promised to give the land of Palestine to the Jews in the Old Testament.
Significantly, God gave the Jews into the hands of their enemies a number of times when they disobeyed Him. They were taken *out* of Palestine and brought back a number of times.
 2. The ultimate disobedience of the Jews was the rejection of God's Son, the Messiah (cf. Dan. 9:24 ". . . to finish transgression" and Mt. 23:29-39 ". . . may come all the righteous blood shed on earth . . . and your house is forsaken and desolate"; and Luke 19:41-44 ". . . because you did not know the time of your visitation.")
 3. Jesus predicted the dispossession of the Jews by God in His parables in Matt. 21 and 22.
 - a. King's marriage feast for his son . . . the king sent his troops (Rome's army, Mt. 24:15, "desolating sacrilege") and destroyed those murderers.
 - b. The householder's vineyard . . . "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons." This is the sentence the Jews pronounced upon themselves! Mt. 21:33-41.

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Then Jesus reinforced it, "Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits thereof."

4. Jesus predicted the Jews would ". . . fall by the edge of the sword, and be led captive into all the nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Lk. 21:24). The Old Testament era was the times of the Jews. The New Testament era is the times of the Gentiles. Judaism is a thing of the past!
5. The apostle Paul, speaking of the Jews nationally, said that "God's wrath *came* (*ephtasen*, Gr. aor. past tense) upon them *to the end* (*eis telos*), or "to completion." I Thess. 2:16. *Judaism cannot be revived*, although individual Jews may be saved if they accept the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17). Daniel 9:27 calls the destruction of Jerusalem—the "*decreed end*."
6. Once the Messiah has come and completed His work, God has dispensed forever with a special *place* of worship (Jn. 4:21-24; Acts 17:24-25); any other *sacrifices* (Heb. 9:26; 10:12-14), etc.
7. To populate Palestine with a theocracy of Judaism, reinstitute the Temple and its sacrifices, reconstitute a Jewish priesthood, would violate and contradict the very plain teaching of the New Testament that the church of Jesus Christ (composed of both Jew and Gentile on the same basis) is the primary object of God's redemptive work . . . and not the Jewish nation!
8. The book of Galatians makes it plain that "in Christ" there are no more racial or social distinctions ever again (Gal. 3:26-29). If we are in Christ, we are Abraham's "offspring." Or, to put it another way, a true "Jew" is one who is inwardly, not genetically (Rom. 2:28-29). The true Israel of God is that which is a *new* creation (Gal. 6:15-16).
9. True Zion is the church. Heb. 12:18-24
10. Judaism is the kingdom that was "shaken" and "removed." Heb. 12:25-27
11. Christianity is the kingdom that "cannot be shaken." Heb. 12:28
12. Judaism is "no lasting city" Heb. 13:14 and to go to Christ it must be outside the camp (of Judaism) Heb. 13:13.
13. The twelve tribes of Israel in Rev. 7:1-8 cannot refer to a literal return of Old Testament Israel to Palestine because that list leaves out the tribes of Dan and Ephraim, and inserts two tribes not originally given an inheritance—Levi and Joseph.
14. It is very significant that no New Testament writer mentions a future return of the Jews to the land of Palestine. Very

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obviously the return of the Jews to the land of which the Old Testament prophets spoke had already occurred in the restoration of the captivities, or, figuratively in the establishment of the church.

15. Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 9:24-27) plainly teaches that *God would finish His work* for the redemption of the world *through the Jews* 490 years after the "going forth of the word to rebuild" Jerusalem. From 457 B.C. (see Ezra 7) to 34 A.D. (allowing for the 4-year mistake in our calendar) is 490 years. 34 A.D. was after the stoning of Stephen and when the gospel was initially taken to the Gentiles (Samaritans and Ethiopian Eunuch of Acts 8; Paul's conversion and commission Acts 9; Cornelius Acts 10).
16. Isaiah predicts that God will establish a "new" nation before the "old" one passes away (Isa. 66:7ff.) and that the new will be established with one stroke (Heb. *pa'am*). A land and a nation was brought forth with one stroke before the old passed away on the Day of Pentecost, June, A.D. 30. What the Old Testament prophets predict about the future of the glorious land has to do with the church of Christ, for the most part.

This does not mean, of course, that some who call themselves Jews today, will never go back to Palestine. They may even build a new Temple there some day. But it does mean that as any of them go back they do so entirely on their own, apart from any covenanted purpose to that end and entirely outside of Scripture prophecy. No Scripture blessing is promised for a project of that kind.

It may be that in years to come the Jews will possess a larger part, or even all, of Palestine. We do not know. But if they do they will secure it as other nations secure property, through negotiation, or purchase, or conquest NOT BY VIRTUE OF ANY AS YET UNFULFILLED PROPHECIES OR BIBLICAL PROMISES. THERE ARE NO SUCH PROPHECIES OR PROMISES!

In the meantime, Zionism, premillennialism and dispensationalism must bear part of the responsibility for the evil and dangerous situation that has arisen in the Middle East, since it has encouraged Jews to believe they are rightful owners of that land and that it is divinely ordained that they are again to possess it.

The British had no ethical or political right to promise Palestine to the Jews at the end of WW I. The UN had no right to partition it. It should have legally been returned to the Palestinians. Ever since the partitioning, the Jews have extended their borders beyond those set by the UN.