

Lost Among Brambles

A Critical Review of Tim Warner's *Time of the End*

By
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Preface

This critical review of *Time of the End*¹ has not been written as a mere intellectual exercise. Nor has it been written for the purpose of disparaging Tim Warner or any leaders or members of 4WindsFellowships. As a former member and teaching elder in this fellowship, I respect these fellow-believers in Christ and wish them success in sowing seeds and reaping fruit for the Kingdom of God.

This has been written with the conviction that there are tremendous practical, personal, and spiritual implications at stake and my conscience compels me to do this. If one accepts Tim's conclusion concerning the date of Christ's return, then it logically follows that he will also factor this expectation into every aspect of his life including choices about the future, about education, career, marriage, whether to have children, how to handle finances, and a host of other major life decisions.

Tim's conclusion is either right or it is wrong. So the questions that weigh on my conscience are what will happen to Tim's followers if he is wrong and what will happen to those who reject his conclusions if he is right? The practical implications cannot be exaggerated and I do not take these questions lightly. It was first of all out of a desire to be absolutely certain in my own mind that I began this investigation. I have been, and continue to be, unwaveringly resolved to follow the evidence and the truth no matter where it leads.

-Roger Samsel (April 2021)

¹ Published by Tim Warner, Copyright 2012.

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Introduction

This is the second time I have written a review of *Time of the End*. My first review was written in January 2013, one month after it was published. I had received an advance copy from the author asking for my feedback. My feedback at that time was inadequate and the review I wrote was superficial. Here is my original review:

Religious books and Bible studies don't usually come with warning labels. This one should. Here is what the WARNING label should look like...

"WARNING: Reading this book could be hazardous to your preconceived ideas, theological biases, sacred cows, and long cherished beliefs about end time prophecy. People whose beliefs about prophecy might be irreparably damaged by reading this book include Dispensationalists, Amillennialists, Preterists, pastors, laymen and anyone whose religious diet requires spoon-feeding large amounts of feel-good, easy-to-swallow, warmed-over theological opinions. If your constitution includes a history of adverse reactions when being challenged to think, then don't read this book. If you have a history of tremors, seizures, fits, spasms or hyperventilation whenever your theological beliefs are put to the test, then you might be suffering from a meat allergy and this book could kill you. Just put it down, walk away slowly, and go drink a glass of warm milk."

BUT if you are an honest truth seeker and willing to follow the truth no matter where it leads and no matter what the cost, then this book is for you. If you want to understand what the earliest Christians believed about the end times and how we have come from there to where we are today, then this book will be an eye-opener. If you are tired of being led by the nose by the modern church's prophecy gurus, then this book will be an absolute delight. In comparison with the popular teachings from Dispensational and Amillennial sources, you will find it a refreshing drink of cold water in a desert of prophecy nonsense. That is how this reviewer would characterize it.

My challenge to the prospective reader is, don't be dissuaded by negative remarks from critics who haven't even bothered to read the book. Don't let anyone else do your thinking for you. Think for yourself! Read the book and then search the Scriptures to see "whether these things are so" (Acts 17:11).

It has now been eight years since I wrote that. Having written something like that once forces me to conduct this new review with more humility and hopefully more substance.

Because of the nature of Tim's claim, and the personal implications to those who follow his teaching, it must be held to the highest possible standards of exegesis. I will also seek to hold myself to the same standards. Throughout this review, I will attempt to weigh Tim's exposition against the following four principles of Biblical Exegesis.

1. Absolute Authority of Scripture
2. Grammatical-Historical Interpretation
3. Sound Logic
4. Historical Precedent

In the Introduction to his book, Tim recounts a litany of failed attempts in just the past few years to predict the date of the Second Coming of Christ. Tim's list is truncated inasmuch as there have been scores of attempts to predict Christ's coming going back at least to Hippolytus who predicted that Jesus would return in the year 500 AD and Pope Sylvester the Second's prediction that Jesus would return on January 1, 1000 AD.

Methods for predicting the date of Christ's return have included personal revelation, visions, numerology, encoded messages in the Bible and of course, chronological calculations. All of those whose predictions have passed were obviously in error. The most recent of these was Ronald Weinland's prediction that Jesus would return on Pentecost (June 8) in 2019. This did not occur, but that fact has not slowed Weinland from issuing new predictions. There are several outstanding predictions which still lie in the future. These include F. Kenton Beshore's calculation that Jesus must return by 2028 "at the latest," Jakob Lorber's prediction that Jesus must return between 2030 and 2033, and Frank Tipler's prediction that Jesus will return no later than 2057.

In recounting the failures of previous pastors and self-appointed prophets to predict the Lord's return, Tim does not have a kind word to say about these men. Nor does he have a kind word for those Christians who believed their predictions. They are "*more gullible than non-Christians*," "*without critical analysis*," and "*have no one to blame but themselves*."

In Tim's reckoning, these false predictions all serve a diabolical purpose. They are Satan's devices and emissaries to cast disrepute on "*date setting*" and to be a distraction from the genuine discovery of this date when it is finally "*unsealed in the time of the end*" and perceived by "*the wise who will understand*." Tim claims to have that understanding and to have made that discovery. His prediction is that the Lord will return on Yom Kippur, 2036.²

This review does not cover every chapter in Tim's book. Instead, I have selected only those chapters which I consider to be the backbone of Tim's argument. I have organized my review in two broad categories: *Scriptural Evidence* and *Historical Evidence*. I have divided my review into sections and subsections with letter

² Either October 1 or October 2 depending on the method for determining the date of the Feast of Yom Kippur. October 1 is given in the book, but the October 2 date has been cited in other discussions.

designations (A, B, C...) to avoid their being confused with the chapter divisions in Tim's book. Each of the subsections focuses on a specific problem in Time of the End or develops a separate point. The chapter numbers in parenthesis refer to the chapters in *Time of the End* (TOTE).

Part I Scriptural Evidence

Section A. No Man is Greater Than His Master (Review of Chapter 1 in TOTE, "Knowing the Day and Hour")

Section B. A More Sure Prophetic Word (Review of Chapter 3 in TOTE, "The Millennial Week in Scripture")

Part II Historical Evidence

Section C. Setting the Record Straight (Review of Chapter 2 in TOTE, "Early Christian Eschatology")

Section D. Historical Survey of Ante-Nicene Eschatology with a Focus on Chiliasm

Section E. Primacy of the Septuagint (Review of Chapter 7 in TOTE, "Demise of the Millennial Week")

The reader of this review may wish to know what my personal beliefs are regarding eschatology before continuing to read. The following are the truths that I hold.

- *I believe in the personal return of Christ to earth in His resurrected flesh at the end of a literal, seven-year Tribulation to the Mount of Olives.*
- *At His return, He will resurrect all of the dead saints from all ages and gather the living faithful from every corner of the world to meet Him.*
- *We will stand individually before His judgment seat.*
- *I believe He will then begin His reign as King from His throne in the literal, earthly city of Jerusalem.*
- *I believe that God will literally fulfill His promise of eternal inheritance of the earth to Abraham and to his "Seed" which is Christ.*
- *I believe that all of the faithful, both Jews and Gentiles, are children of Abraham, are "in Christ," and will have their lot and inheritance in the earth.*
- *I believe that Christ's Kingdom will have dominion over the entire inhabited earth. The curse will be removed from the physical creation and the earth will be renewed to its pristine condition.*
- *I believe that this Kingdom will not last a mere 1,000 years, but that it will never end.*
- *I believe that during the first 1,000 years of this Kingdom, Satan will be bound in the Abyss, unable to deceive the nations.*
- *At the end of this 1,000 years, Satan will be released for a short time to lead one final rebellion culminating in the Gog / Magog war, the general resurrection of the unjust, and the Great White Throne Judgment. With the wicked finally destroyed, the Kingdom will continue for eternity without end.*

Tim concludes the Introduction of his book with this exhortation,

As with any human endeavor, mistakes are always possible. The reader is encouraged to be skeptical, to check out the things presented here against original sources. Plenty of footnotes have been provided to help verify claims. Do not accept the conclusions of this book unless you are compelled to do so by overwhelming evidence which you have verified independently. Ultimately, God's Word will judge us all, including our motives. "*Test all things; hold fast what is good.*"

It is in the spirit of that exhortation that this review is written.

Prolog

The Great Disappointment Part I

Outside of a narrow, separatist group of denominations, few Christians today are aware of the movement in the early 19th century known disparagingly as “Millerism” and charitably as “Adventism.” William Miller was a Baptist preacher who discovered what he believed to be the chronological key to discerning when the second coming of Christ would take place. His teaching focused primarily on the dreams and visions in the Book of Daniel, but also included extensive commentary and teaching on the eschatological parables of Jesus, Matthew 24, and the Book of Revelation.

Miller observed (he was not the first) that the 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel begins with the decree of Artaxerxes and ends with the crucifixion of Christ. Seventy weeks is 490 days. The length of time between the decree of Artaxerxes and the crucifixion is 490 years. Thus, 1 day = 1 year. Miller believed this to be the key to understanding the rest of Daniel’s dreams and visions. After all, if 1 day = 1 year in one passage in Daniel, it is not a great stretch to conclude that the other prophecies in Daniel should be interpreted the same way.

Miller’s theory was bolstered by additional references. Miller noted the following:

Numbers 14:34, *“After the number of days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall you bear your iniquities, even forty years.”*

Ezekiel 4:5, 6, *“For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days; so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on the right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days; I have appointed thee each day for a year.”*

Genesis 29:27, *“Fulfil her week (seven days) and we will give thee this also, for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet other seven years.”*

Miller next applied this key to Daniel 8:13-14.

“Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand three hundred days: then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.”

Miller had discovered a prophecy that was to begin at the same time as the 490 year prophecy but would terminate after 2,300 years. He interpreted the “*daily sacrifice*” in this prophecy to mean pagan rites and sacrifices, and the “*transgression of desolation*” to mean Papal rites and sacrifices. The “*host*” was taken to mean the Christian church. The “*cleansing of the sanctuary*” was interpreted to mean Christ’s return to cleanse his true, spiritual sanctuary, as Peter had written, “*Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices...*”

Miller calculated that the termination of the 2,300 years would be sometime in 1843 – 1844. Hesitantly at first, and later with great power and boldness, he began to teach and preach this discovery. He published a series of lectures in book form.³

When Miller began preaching in the late 1830s, his progress as measured by the number of converts was quick. But his appeal was limited by his ability to travel from town to town using the technology of the day. But soon his message was embraced by Joshua V. Himes who was a master of organization and promotion. Books, pamphlets, articles, and regular newspapers were written and published to spread the message. Soon a sizeable number of capable preachers joined the crusade.

From the beginning, Miller emphasized that those joining his movement should be evangelistic and should avoid topics that were doctrinally divisive. After all, since Jesus was returning in just a few years, there was no point in dividing people over doctrine. Christ would fix those differences Himself. The important thing was to preach the gospel and to warn souls that the Day of Judgment was at hand.

The success of the movement was astounding. At all of Miller’s preaching crusades, multitudes were converted, not only to the Gospel of Christ, but also to the message that Christ was returning in a very short time.

The message crossed denominational lines. Adherents included Baptists, Methodists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Restorationists, and others. Almost all of the adherents were prohibitionists and the message spread into the black slave population. It is estimated that by the time of the expected day of Christ’s return, there were at least 500,000 souls who had joined the Adventist movement.

That is not to say there was no opposition. But the dominant eschatology in America at that time was post-millennialism. Men like Charles Finney insisted that the Millennium would precede Christ’s return, not the other way around. Miller argued convincingly and powerfully for his premillennial hope.

³ Miller, William, *Evidence From Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ, About the Year 1843*, Published by Joshua V. Himes, 1842

More importantly, his presentation and defense of his calculation of the time of the end was *plausible* and *persuasive*. Many preachers and seminarians approached Miller to debate and to refute his theory only to end up agreeing with him and joining the movement. Some of them lost their positions and appointments within their churches, denominations, or schools.

The year 1843 passed without Christ returning. Miller had never specified the exact date, but by the spring of 1844, disappointment was beginning to set in. Then Samuel S. Snow made a great discovery and refocused the movement.

Snow preached a powerful sermon in which he pointed out that all the great prophetic events concerning Christ occurred on specific dates associated with the Jewish feasts. Christ had been crucified on Passover. The Holy Spirit had come on Pentecost. Thus, it was to be expected that Christ's return would coincide with the Day of Atonement which would fall on October 22, 1844.

This discovery electrified and breathed fresh wind into the movement. A brand new urgency and fervency took hold on the Adventists. Now that they knew the exact date of Christ's return in a mere seven months, no time, energy, or cost could be spared. The Adventists gave themselves without reserve to preaching the Gospel to the lost and waking up the sleeping virgins and warning them that the Bridegroom was coming. Like most Americans at that time, the majority of Adventists were farmers or merchants. Many farmers did not plant their fields that year. Many merchants gave the entirety of their businesses to the cause.

On October 22, 1844, hundreds of thousands of Adventists gathered in their homes or with their congregations to pray, sing hymns, and to await the imminent return of Christ.⁴

⁴ Continued in Epilog, page 232

Part I

Scriptural Evidence

Section A

No Man is Greater Than His Master

Introduction

But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. (Mark 13:32-33)

The date of Christ's return has been kept hidden for thousands of years from men, angels, and even the Son of God. Tim believes that he has discovered it and my task is to test that claim. Specifically, Tim claims that the Second Coming of Christ will occur 6,000 years to the day from Adam's sin and that he has discovered this date by means of chronological research.

At face value, the Scripture quoted above and several others like it seem to indicate that knowing the exact timing of the Lord's return is knowledge we have not been given. These passages suggest that no one (including the angels of God and Christ Himself) knows the day and hour except the Father only. Knowing that this is *THE* major objection to the entire premise of his book, Tim deals with it in the first chapter. This is where he defends the validity of his premise against this objection. In his words, it is "*the most important major hurdle*" that he must clear. If he does not clear this hurdle, then the premise of the book in general, and the identification of October 1, 2036 in particular, should not be accepted.

To restate my introduction, because of the nature of this claim, his work ought to be held to the highest possible standards of exegesis and exposition. The primary passage that must be dealt with is Matthew 24, especially Verses 36-44. This passage has parallels in Mark 13, Luke 12, and Luke 21. Another primary passage that must be addressed is Acts 1:6-8. Tim deals with Matthew 24 and Luke 12 in *Time of the End*. He does not address Acts 1 in the book, but he did address it on one of his discussion forums in April of 2016.⁵

⁵ That forum has since been removed, but a copy of the discussion is reproduced in §A12.

§A1: Tim begins the discussion of knowing the day and hour by presenting an either/or choice. The argument is a false dilemma.

Before dealing with any specific passage, Tim opens the chapter with two questions. He writes,

Before we begin any attempt to discern the time of the Lord's return, we first need to clear the most important major hurdle. Is this information indeed something that God wants His people to possess as we near the time of the end? Or does God want us to be completely surprised by the coming of Jesus Christ?
(23)

These two choices are at opposite extremes with knowing the exact date of Christ's return 25 years in advance at one end and being completely surprised by it at the other. They are presented as if there were no middle ground. If there is a legitimate third alternative, then this is a "false dilemma" and violates the third principle of Biblical exegesis – Sound Logic. I believe the Bible gives us a third alternative. We will know His coming is near when we see the signs He told us would immediately precede Him.

§A2: Tim creates an impossible standard for 1st Century Jews to follow.

Tim projects this false dilemma both backwards and forwards. He states several times in the next few pages that the principle failure of the Jews at Christ's FIRST coming was that they did not keep a continuous calendar so that they could have known the exact year of His crucifixion. Similarly, he says that having such a calendar and possessing this precise knowledge NOW is equivalent to being prepared for Christ's SECOND coming. He writes,

This information was intended to give the Jews adequate warning of when the Messiah would appear. Yet, they did not heed Daniel, they did not keep up a continuous biblical calendar, and consequently, they did not recognize the Messiah when He came. If they had heeded Daniel's prophecy and kept a continuous calendar they would have known the exact year of Jesus' crucifixion.
(24)

Before continuing with this quotation, it is necessary to point out that the standard Tim is applying here to the Jews is an impossible standard. It is not impossible because of the difficulties inherent in keeping accurate chronological records, as formidable as that task would be. It is impossible because the crucifixion of Christ was a "*mystery*" hidden in the Old Testament prophecies and therefore impossible to understand in advance. Yes, the details of His crucifixion are all there. But we can understand them only in retrospect and only because they have been expounded by the apostles in the New Testament. The purpose of a "mystery" in Scripture is to conceal the prophecy from plain view until further revelation is given to unveil it. The crucifixion of Christ is one of these mysteries.

⁷ But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,

⁸ **which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.**

⁹ But as it is written:

*“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
Nor have entered into the heart of man
The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”*

¹⁰ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 1 Corinthians 2:7-10

Not only did none of the rulers understand it, neither did the apostles – His inner circle of friends. Even when He spoke to them plainly about His impending death and resurrection, they did not understand what He was saying. Why didn't they understand? Luke explains.

31 Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished.

32 For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon.

33 They will scourge Him and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.”

*34 **But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know the things which were spoken.*** Luke 18

Even when it was prophesied to the apostles in plain language, they did not understand what was being said because it was hidden from them. Therefore expecting the Jews to understand that the Messiah would be crucified, and to know the exact year when it would happen is an impossible standard. God hid it from them; if He had not done so, the crucifixion could not have occurred.

§A3: Tim's theory misrepresents the reason why some were condemned.

Continuing with the quotation of *Time of the End*, Tim's hypothesis about the 1st Century Jews results in misrepresenting the reason why that generation was condemned.

Jesus condemned them for not knowing the time of His appearance from Daniel's prophecy. *“For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, **because you did not know the time of your visitation.**”* (Luke 19:43-44) God held the Jews accountable for understanding the prophecies, keeping an accurate chronology, and knowing the time when Jesus would appear the first time. Why would He expect anything less from us

regarding His second coming? He has given us in Scripture all of the necessary information to know when it will occur. (24)

According to Tim, the Jews were condemned because,

- i. They did not understand the prophecies (particularly from Daniel),
- ii. They did not keep up a continuous Biblical calendar,
- iii. They failed to keep an accurate chronology, and
- iv. They did not know the exact year of Jesus' crucifixion.

Daniel's prophecy is indisputably important but Tim is mistaken on several points. It is not true that the Jews made no attempt to keep meticulous chronological records and a continuous calendar. They did so obsessively.⁶ In fact, many of them were expecting the Messiah at the time Jesus arrived. However, even allowing for mistakes and variations in their methodology, Tim is drastically misstating the reason they were condemned. Their problem was not that they failed to expect the Messiah at the right time; their problem was that Jesus was not the Messiah they were expecting.

As one reads the Gospels carefully, he discovers many passages where Jesus pronounced condemnation upon that generation, especially the Jewish leadership. They were condemned for their lack of faith, their hypocrisy, their tyranny over the poor, their exploitation of widows, their treachery, their adultery, their substituting tradition for Scripture, their greed, their loving the praise of men, their lust for power, their lack of justice and mercy, their corruption, their mishandling of Scripture, their self-indulgence, etc. The Lord never condemned them for their mistakes in keeping the chronology and a continuous calendar. (I will address Luke 19 in a moment.)

And of those whom He did *NOT* condemn (the apostles, the 70, the 500 brethren who saw Him after His resurrection, the women who ministered to Him, Mary, Martha, Lazarus, the publicans and sinners, the prostitutes, the lepers, blind Bartimaeus, Jairus, the woman caught in adultery, the Samaritan woman at the well, etc.), He said, "*your faith has saved you.*" He never congratulated their skills in keeping the calendar.

Concerning the future, there is no place in Scripture where we are ever told that keeping a continuous calendar and an accurate chronology is equivalent to being prepared for His coming. Here is what we are told.

28 And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

⁶ Ancient Jewish attempts to keep chronological records and a continuous calendar includes the Works of Josephus, Demetrius the Chronographer, Eupolemus, the Book of Jubilees, and numerous works found in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

29 If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him. 1 John 2

What is explicitly required of us is that we “*abide in Him*.” If we do that, then we can have confidence that we are prepared for His appearing. Tim begins with a false dilemma, overstates the importance of keeping an accurate chronology, and then misrepresents the true cause of condemnation and salvation both backwards and forwards.

§A4: Tim misinterprets Luke 19.

I will now respond to Tim’s quotation of Luke 19:43-44. Tim asserts that when Jesus said, “...*because you did not know the time of your visitation*...” He meant that He was condemning them for “not understanding Daniel’s prophecy,” for not “keeping an accurate chronology,” and for “not knowing the time of His appearance from Daniel’s prophecy.” Here is the quotation again.

Jesus condemned them for not knowing the time of His appearance from Daniel’s prophecy. ‘*For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, **because you did not know the time of your visitation***.’ (Luke 19:43-44) God held the Jews accountable for understanding the prophecies, keeping an accurate chronology, and knowing the time when Jesus would appear the first time. (24)

The context of Luke 19 is the Lord’s Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem riding on the back of a donkey. This event is recorded in all four Gospels (Matthew 21, Mark 11, Luke 19, and John 12). Jesus had sent two of His disciples ahead to find “*a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat*.” They were to bring the colt to Jesus. They threw their own clothes on the colt and sat Jesus on him. Then as He was entering the city, many of the multitude spread their clothes and palm branches on the road. Beginning at this point, let’s examine Luke 19 in its fuller context.

*37 Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen,
38 saying: “ ‘Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!’
Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”
39 And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, “Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.”
40 But He answered and said to them, “I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.”
41 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it,*

*42 saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.
43 For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side,
44 and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation." Luke 19*

With this context in place, I believe I can give at least four reasons why Tim's interpretation of this passage is incorrect. First, there is no reference, quotation, or allusion to Daniel's prophecy anywhere in the context in any of the four accounts.

Secondly, there is in fact a prophecy being fulfilled, but it is not from Daniel. It is from Zechariah 9. Zechariah 8-11 is a prophecy of Jerusalem's future in the Messianic Kingdom. It is a prophecy of PEACE. Here are a few excerpts from Zechariah 8-11.

*'I am zealous for Zion with great zeal;
With great fervor I am zealous for her.'*

*'I will return to Zion,
And dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.
Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth,
The Mountain of the Lord of hosts,
The Holy Mountain.'*

*'Old men and old women shall again sit
In the streets of Jerusalem,
Each one with his staff in his hand
Because of great age.
The streets of the city
Shall be full of boys and girls
Playing in its streets.'*

*'Behold, I will save My people from the land of the east
And from the land of the west;
8 I will bring them back,
And they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.
They shall be My people
And I will be their God,
In truth and righteousness.'*

*And it shall come to pass
That just as you were a curse among the nations,
O house of Judah and house of Israel,
So I will save you, and you shall be a blessing.*

All of this is prophesying a time of great peace for the City of Jerusalem. Included in this prophecy are these words in Chapter 9.

*9 "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your King is coming to you;
He is just and having salvation,
Lowly and riding on a donkey,
A colt, the foal of a donkey.
10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
And the horse from Jerusalem;
The battle bow shall be cut off.
He shall speak peace to the nations;
His dominion shall be 'from sea to sea,
And from the River to the ends of the earth.' Zechariah 9:9-10*

Verse 9 of this prophecy was fulfilled in the Triumphal Entry recorded in Luke 19. It is this prophecy from Zechariah, not Daniel, which the people failed to recognize or perceive. They knew about Zechariah's prophecy that their King would ride into the city, lowly, on the back of a donkey. But when He actually did so, they did not perceive what was happening.

Thirdly, even Jesus' apostles did not understand this prophecy. Nor did they understand that the Lord was fulfilling it before their very eyes. John makes this observation in his account of the Triumphal Entry.

*14 Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written:
15 "Fear not, daughter of Zion;
Behold, your King is coming,
Sitting on a donkey's colt."
16 His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him. John 12*

If Jesus' own apostles did not understand these things until after His resurrection, then how can Tim maintain that Jesus condemned the Jews for their failure to not only understand them, but to also keep an accurate chronology in anticipation of them?

Fourthly, Tim's interpretation of this passage turns the Messiah's sorrowful lamentation over the city of His heart's desire into something more like a professor's scolding of his students because of their intellectual shortcomings. It simply misses the heart of the passage, in my opinion.

This is an error in applying Grammatical Historical Interpretation. Tim did not make his case from the context, the grammar, or any of the parallel passages. In doing so, he missed the most important point of the passage.

§A5: Tim's theory overlooks the historical context.⁷

In §A2 - §4, I pointed out that Tim set up an impossible standard for the Jews to follow and misinterpreted Jesus' statement to support it. In addition to that, Tim gives the impression that the Jews were oblivious to or complacent about the prophecies. Nothing could be further from the truth. He writes,

In the Seventy Weeks prophecy of Daniel 9, he was told exactly how long it would be until the Messiah came and was crucified almost 500 years before it occurred! This information was intended to give the Jews adequate warning of when the Messiah would appear. Yet, they did not heed Daniel, they did not keep up a continuous biblical calendar, and consequently, they did not recognize the Messiah when He came... [24]

I have already mentioned that the Jews did in fact make serious attempts to keep meticulous chronological records and a continuous calendar. There were at least four competing Jewish traditions in the centuries and decades leading up to the time of Christ which all attempted to compile a continuous chronology from the creation of the world and to predict the time of Messiah's coming based on Daniel's prophecy. These attempts have been discovered and documented in Essene, Hellenistic, Zealot, and Pharisaic writings and traditions. In addition to the works (or fragments thereof) of these Jewish authors, these attempts are even testified to by Roman historians.⁸

Without diving too deeply into the details,⁹ the Essene tradition is found in the Dead Seas Scrolls (DSS) 4Q384-390 (also referred to as the "*Pseudo-Ezekiel Document*") and in the Aramaic *Testament of Levi* written in the second century B.C. Using the chronological data found in the *Book of Jubilees*, the Essenes calculated the creation of the world in 3906 B.C. They marked the beginning of Daniel's 70 Weeks (490 years) at the return from the Babylonian Exile which they computed to be A.M. 3430 which would

⁷ This material probably could have been treated in Part II where I discuss the Historical Evidence. I have placed it here because it has a direct bearing on Tim's interpretation of a specific passage.

⁸ The Roman Historian Tacitus wrote in Book V of his History describing the siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., "*Some few put a fearful meaning on these events, but in most there was a firm persuasion, that in the ancient records of their priests was contained a prediction of how at this very time the East was to grow powerful, and rulers, coming from Judaea, were to acquire universal empire. These mysterious prophecies had pointed to Vespasian and Titus, but the common people, with the usual blindness of ambition, had interpreted these mighty destinies of themselves, and could not be brought even by disasters to believe the truth.*"

⁹ The details are contained in Beckwith, R.T., *Daniel 9 and the Date of Messiah's Coming in Essene, Hellenistic, Pharisaic, Zealot and Early Christian Computation*, *Revue de Qumran* 10, no. 4:521-42, 1981. For more details, see also: Silver, Abba Hillel, *The History of Messianic Speculation in Israel*, The Macmillan Co, New York, 1927 and Evans, Craig, *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1997

correspond to approximately 492 B.C. The 490 years would have expired in 3-2 B.C. according to these figures.

The Hellenistic tradition used the chronological data found in the Septuagint (LXX) and is documented in Josephus and in the historian Demetrius (preserved by Clement of Alexandria, *Stomata* I, xxi, 141). There were both messianic and non-messianic Hellenistic traditions, but the non-messianic tradition was dominant. The calculations place the beginning of the Babylonian Exile in 640 B.C. This tradition began the 70 weeks somewhere around the beginning of the Exile and interpreted the Prince in Daniel 9 to be the high priest Onias III who was murdered (“*cut off*”) approximately 171 B.C.

Another Essene / Pharisaic tradition is preserved in the Pseudepigraphic work, *The Assumption of Moses*.¹⁰ According to this tradition, the Messiah was expected between 10 B.C. and 2 A.D.

There is a fourth Pharisaic / Zealot tradition (documented in the *Seder Olam Rabbah* and Josephus) that also began the 490 year count down with the beginning of the Exile. However, the exile was erroneously dated to have commenced in 421 B.C. This would place the end of the 70 weeks – and the coming of the Messiah – between 63 and 70 A.D. It was likely this expectation and hope that inspired the Zealot revolt in 68-70 A.D. which led to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.

The reason there existed multiple, competing traditions which were all based on the single prophecy of Daniel is because of confusion on the following points: (1) When should the countdown begin? Some traditions began with the start of the captivity, some with the date of Daniel’s prophecy, and some with the return from the captivity. (2) Even when the identity of the event was decided, fixing the actual dates was inexact. (3) There was confusion and debate as to whether the prophecy referred to the Messiah Son of David, to two Messiahs, or to some other person?¹¹ (4) There was also uncertainty about whether the prophecy referred to two “princes” or to one? (5) The existence of a “gap” between the 69th and the 70th Week is not apparent from the text.

It is difficult to fault the Jews too severely when we consider that these Jewish attempts were followed by early (and modern) Christian attempts to compile chronologies based on Daniel’s prophecy and available data. Yet even with the benefit of hindsight, they (and we) also make mistakes! Early Christian chronographers have included Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Julius Africanus, and Hippolytus. Although they had the

¹⁰ The date of this book is complicated, but the most likely scenario is that the primary work was completed during the last half of the first century BC into which chapters 5 and 6 were interpolated sometime during the first third of the first century A.D.

¹¹ Because the Hebrew word “anointed” can refer to prophets, priests, and kings.

inflexible date of the destruction of the temple as an anchor point, the remaining details of their calculations show remarkable variation.

There are many things we can learn by studying these ancient attempts; hopefully one of those things is humility. Another possible lesson to be gleaned from this brief account is that those who recognized the Messiah when He came, did not do so because of their intellectual prowess and skillful research in chronology. According to the Messiah Himself, they did so because the quality of their faith was like that of little children.¹²

Following the destruction in 70 A.D., there were other Jewish traditions which also attempted to calculate when the Messiah would come. One of these led to the Bar Kokhba revolt in 132-136 A.D. But these traditions were based on revisions to the chronology that originated after the failure of previous predictions and the catastrophe in 70 A.D.

§A6: Tim commits a “Bait and Switch” fallacy in his interpretation of Matthew 24.

The next problem I observe is another logical fallacy. It is the one known as “Motte and Bailey” or “Bait and Switch.” This fallacy occurs when there are two propositions. The first proposition (the Motte) is easy to defend but the second (the Bailey) is difficult or impossible to defend. The fallacy consists in offering evidence or proof for the Motte *AS IF* that constituted evidence or proof for the Bailey. I believe Tim commits this fallacy.

Tim makes several references to the passages that say “*when you see these things come to pass, then you will know...*” These passages state explicitly that *AFTER* the occurrence of certain signs, *THEN* we will know that His Coming is near. In Tim’s discussion, I suggest that the “Motte” is the proposition that it will be possible to know the time of His coming after the beginning of the signs. The “Bailey” is the proposition that we can possess this knowledge even *BEFORE* those signs by means of careful chronological research. He writes,

Thus, Jesus was pointing all of His followers to Daniel 12 to understand the exact time of His return after this major event occurs. It is obvious, then, that knowing the time of Jesus’ return is not impossible at any time before Jesus appears. Christians will certainly know the exact date once this event occurs if they are “wise” and have paid the least attention to Jesus’ instructions, Daniel’s prophecy, and can count to 1290. If Daniel’s prophecy is to be unsealed in the last days, we ought to be just as eager as Daniel himself was to gain this knowledge at the appropriate time. (25)

It is clear from what he writes after this that he believes NOW is “the appropriate time.” But do these passages support his real proposition, which is that we can (and MUST)

¹² Matthew 11:25; Luke 10:21

know even *BEFORE* these things begin to come to pass in order to be prepared to meet Him? Or is the contrary true? Do these passages actually argue against Tim's proposition? In other words, if Jesus explicitly stated that this knowledge would become known only *AFTER* the signs, then any claim to possess this knowledge *BEFORE* the signs rests on unstable ground. It might be helpful here to recall the questions the disciples had asked Jesus at the beginning of this discourse.

Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" Matthew 24:3

The Lord answered these questions directly. The answer to the first question is that no one knows, neither the angels nor the Son of God. The answer to the second question was a series of signs that would precede His coming, the most paramount of these signs being the Abomination of Desolation. Here are the words of Jesus.

So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! Matthew 24:33

Notice carefully what Jesus says. *WHEN* we see all of the signs He spoke of, *THEN* we will know that His kingdom is "*near*," "*at the doors*." In fact, "*know*" is in the imperative. We are commanded to know when we see all these things. Nowhere in the discourse are we commanded to know prior to the signs.

The words "*near*" and "*at the doors*" suggest something that is impending and very close, but that is still not necessarily exact. So Jesus is allowing limited knowledge of the time of His coming and He specifically states when this knowledge will become available. The problem is, Tim is arguing for knowledge that is far more specific than what Jesus made available and gained far sooner than when He allowed.

With respect to His second coming, the Lord told us clearly **what** we can know, **when** we can know it, and **how** we can know it. And He made it very clear what we **cannot** know. Tim's book also gives us a "what," "when," and "how," but it is quite different from what Jesus said. The following table summarizes the differences.

	<i>According to Jesus</i>	<i>According to Tim</i>
<i>What We Can Know</i>	"That the Kingdom of God is near, even at the doors!"	The exact year and date of Christ's coming
<i>When We Can Know It</i>	"when you see all these things"	It can be known at any time
<i>How We Will Know It</i>	By observing all the signs Jesus listed	By means of chronological research
<i>What We Cannot Know</i>	The day and the hour of Christ's coming	Nothing

The quotation on Page 25 is not the only time that Tim commits this logical fallacy. In fact, the last six pages of this chapter (Pages 33-39) are an extended repetition of it. He gives a lengthy lecture on the necessity of recognizing the signs Jesus listed, what those signs will mean when we see them, and the disastrous consequences of ignoring those signs. It's a great discussion! But then he inexplicably concludes,

Pastors in the end times are commanded by Jesus to discover the timeframe of these events and to prepare the flock under their care. Daniel said that knowledge of the time had been sealed up until "the time of the end." That time is now! (38)

In summary, Tim commits the Bait and Switch fallacy multiple times by conflating two propositions. The first proposition is the knowledge of time of Christ's coming after the Abomination of Desolation and the second proposition is the knowledge of the time before that event.

§A7: Tim discusses reasons for interpreting "Day and Hour" literally or non-literally, but the theory in TOTE makes the discussion superfluous.

Tim starts the discussion of Matthew 24 as follows.

How then should we understand Jesus' statement, "*but of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only*"? First, we need to understand what Jesus meant by the terms, "day" and "hour." Most take both terms literally. Yet, the word "hour" does not necessarily refer to the position of the little hand on the clock. On several other occasions Jesus used the term "hour" to refer to an extended period of time. In fact, He used the term "hour" to describe the whole time of great tribulation. "*Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.*" Revelation

also refers to this as the “hour of His judgment.” It also indicates that the ten kings will reign for “on hour with the Beast,” referring to the final 3.5 years of great tribulation. (25-26)

The “day” is the specific day of His coming. The “hour” is the general timeframe of tribulation events in which this entire series of signs will play out including His coming “immediately after the tribulation of those days.” (27)

According to Tim’s interpretation, “day” in this verse is literal referring to the calendar date on which Christ will return, and “hour” is figurative referring to the whole time of the Great Tribulation. An argument could be made for interpreting both “day” and “hour” literally - meaning they refer to the exact, literal “day” and the literal “hour” when Christ will return – but it is not necessary to do this because Tim’s thesis renders this knowledge superfluous or redundant. How so?

If one knows the exact day of His return, then one automatically also knows when the Tribulation will begin by simply subtracting seven years. Knowing either one implies knowing the other, and conversely, not knowing one implies not knowing the other.

That being said, there is actually something more important to note here. Referring to the table in the previous problem, according to Jesus it is **by means of the signs** He listed (especially the Abomination of Desolation) that we can know when His coming is “*at the doors.*” These signs all occur during the last seven years. The Abomination of Desolation actually occurs 3.5 years before His return. In contrast, according to Tim, it is **by means of chronological research** that we can know when the Tribulation will begin and the exact date of His return before any of these signs take place. Since Tim has calculated the date of Christ’s return to be October 1, 2036, then the date of the Abomination of Desolation can also be calculated by simply subtracting 3.5 years.

This implies that the Abomination of Desolation, when it occurs, will not tell us anything new that we don’t already know (or at least should have known) by means of chronology. At face value, this seems to directly contradict Jesus’ statement that we will know when His coming is impending only after we see the signs, “*So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors!*”

§A8: There are three grammatical errors in the LGV Translation which are used to enable Tim’s interpretation.

Tim’s position is that the apparent (or face value) sense of what Jesus said is incorrect and that we only get this sense because all of our English translations are “imprecise.” So Tim’s exposition of Matthew 24 begins with his own translation but his translation contains at least three grammatical errors which are critical to his interpretation. He writes,

Two things need our attention here. The first is the English translation which is imprecise in virtually all English translations... Below is my literal translation from the Greek Text. (27)

He then retranslates it as follows.

36 “Yet about that day and the hour no one **has seen**, not the messengers of the heavens, except My Father only.” ...

42 “Watch then, because **you have not seen** which hour your Master is coming.

43 Yet, know this: that if the home owner **had seen** which watch the thief is coming, he would have watched and would not have permitted his house to be plundered.

44 **Through this you also become ready**, because you do not know which hour the Son of Man is coming.” (28)

And then he writes this about his own translation,

First, notice that Jesus did not say that no one knows (present tense) the time. Nor did He say that no one will know (future tense). And He certainly did not say that it was impossible to discover the time. He said that no one had discovered (seen or perceived) the time. He used the perfect tense of the verb “see.” The perfect tense refers to a past completed action with the results continuing to the present. The result of observing something in the past is the present knowledge of what was seen. This verb refers to current knowledge based on past observation or discovery. When Jesus said this, no one had yet seen or discovered either the specific day or the general timeframe when Jesus would come. (28)

Tim’s interpretation of this passage depends entirely on his translation, but there are at least three critical errors in the translation.

Grammatical Error 1: οἶδα (oida)

The first issue is Tim’s translation of the word οἶδα which occurs three times in Verses 36, 42, and 43, twice in the perfect tense and the last time in the pluperfect tense. At this point, I have to give some technical background.

In every language, including Greek and English, the meaning of words is not established by form or etymology, but by usage. The word οἶδα comes from the present tense root word εἶδω (eido), which does not exist in Koine Greek. The forms of this word that DO exist fall into two categories: (1) aorist tense, and (2) perfect / pluperfect tense. The question is, how are these two categories used?

In the first (aorist) category, the meaning is “to see.” In the indicative mood, this is always used and translated with the past tense.

In the second (perfect) category, the meaning is “to know.” In the perfect indicative, this word means “to know” and is always used and translated with the present tense. In the pluperfect indicative, it is always used and translated with the past tense.¹³

Following these rules, the NKJV correctly translates these three occurrences as “no one knows,” “you do not know,” and “had known,” respectively. Tim incorrectly translates them as “has seen,” “have seen,” and “had seen.”

I could give scores of examples to prove this point, but it is possible to use this very passage as proof that the correct meaning of οἶδα is “to know” rather than “to see.” Observe Tim’s translation in Verse 43: “if the home owner had seen which watch the thief is coming, he would have watched...” How can an event be “seen” or “observed” before it has happened? It cannot! It is one thing to “know” something will happen; it is quite another thing to “see” it before it happens. In my opinion, this constitutes proof that Tim’s translation is mistaken on this point.

Tim then writes,

First, notice that Jesus did not say that no one knows (present tense) the time. Nor did He say that no one will know (future tense)... He used the perfect tense of the verb “see.” (28)

What Tim does not seem to realize is that the word οἶδα **DOES NOT EXIST** in the **present or future tense forms**. It only exists in the aorist, perfect, and pluperfect forms and the way these should be translated is according to usage.

Tim then writes,

The perfect tense refers to a past completed action with the results continuing to the present. The result of observing something in the past is the present knowledge of what was seen. This verb refers to current knowledge based on past observation or discovery. When Jesus said this, no one had yet seen or discovered either the specific day or the general timeframe when Jesus would come. (28)

What Tim is referring to here is the usual aspectual significance of the perfect tense. But what all grammars and lexicons say about this particular word is that while the form is

¹³ These two categories with these corresponding meanings are stated explicitly in both Thayer’s and Bauer’s Lexicons.

perfect, the sense is actually present. In *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, Wallace¹⁴ explains the rule as follows,

Certain verbs occur frequently (or exclusively) in the perfect tense **without the usual aspectual significance**. They have come to be used just like present tense verbs. This usage is common... οἶδα (to know) is the most commonly used verb in this category. But other verbs also seem to be used this way: εστηκα (to stand), πεποιθα (to persuade), μεμνημαι (to remember). The reason why such perfects have the same semantics as presents is frequently that there is very little distinction between the act and its results. They are stative verbs. The result of knowing is knowing. When one comes to stand he/she still stands. The result of persuading someone is that he/she is still persuaded. Thus this usage occurs especially with verbs where the act slides over into the results. They are resultative perfects to the point that the act itself has virtually died; the results have become the act. In sum, it is important to remember that (1) this usage of the perfect is always lexically influenced (i.e., it occurs only with certain verbs), and (2) **a very large number of perfects must be treated as presents without attaching any aspectual significance to them.** (οἶδα alone constitutes over one-fourth of all perfects in the NT!) (Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* pp. 579-580)

This constitutes proof that in his translation of οἶδα, Tim is mistaken on the meaning of word, the tense, and the aspect.

Grammatical Error 2: διὰ τοῦτο (dia touto)

The second grammatical issue is found in Verse 44. Notice Tim's translation, "***Through this*** you also become ready." The phrase he translates as "*through this*" is διὰ τοῦτο.

This is a very common idiom in the New Testament. It does not mean "*through this*" or "*by means of this*" or anything close to that. According to Thayer's Greek Lexicon, it means "*for this reason,*" "*for this cause,*" "*since this is so,*" "*therefore.*" It NEVER means "*through this.*"

Thayer's Lexicon goes on to say that διὰ τοῦτο ("for this reason") can refer to something either previous in the context or to something that follows. However, if διὰ τοῦτο is followed by the word ὅτι (hoti) meaning "because," then ὅτι is explicitly giving the reason. That is the case in Matthew 24:44. Jesus said, "*For this reason (διὰ τοῦτο) you also be ready, because (ὅτι) the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*" The fact that He is coming at an hour we do not expect is the reason we are commanded to be ready.

¹⁴ Wallace's is the most respected advanced Greek grammar within conservative theological scholarship.

I could give dozens of examples where διὰ τοῦτο is found. But I will only give a few and I have chosen these from passages that Tim has translated in his *Last Generation Version*. The passages below are all quotations of Tim's LGV. The phrase in bold is his translation of διὰ τοῦτο.

Because of this, God surrenders them to worthless passions. Romans 1:26

Therefore, [the fulfillment of the promise is] from trust, according to grace, to confirm the promise to all the "seed..." Romans 4:16

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the system... Romans 5:12

This is also **why** you pay taxes. For they are officials of God performing for this same [purpose]. Romans 13:6

Yet the nations are [also meant] to glorify God for His mercy. For it has been written:
"For this reason I will avow to You among the nations, and play to Your name."
Romans 15:9

Because of this, from the day which we heard, are also unceasingly praying...
Colossians 1:9

These are enough examples from Tim's own translation to show that he obviously knows that διὰ τοῦτο means "for this reason." But in a handful of instances, he chooses instead to use "through this," in the sense of "by means of this" even though "for this reason" always makes perfect sense in the context. There is no support for his translation in any grammar or lexicon.

The importance of this translation issue cannot be overstated. It is no exaggeration to say that Tim's entire argument stands or falls on this one point. **If Jesus simply said, "For this reason, you also be ready because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect," then there is no command to discover the time** before the signs and "knowing" is not prerequisite to "watching."

Besides the grammars and lexicons, which *ALL* oppose Tim on this point, is there any other way to be certain that the correct meaning is "for this reason" and not "through this"? Yes, there is!

Let's compare Luke's account of this parable with Matthew's. Luke records the same statement of Jesus, but he uses a different idiom. Bear in mind that Jesus was most likely speaking to His disciples in Aramaic, the common language of the Jews in this region at that time. When the apostles wrote the Gospels, they translated His words into Greek. Thus we have the same saying recorded with a slight difference in words, but no difference in meaning. The important thing to notice is the wording in Verse 40.

³⁹ *“But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.”* ⁴⁰ **Therefore** you also be ready, **for** the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” Luke 12:39-40

Observe that this appears to be identical to the wording in Matthew 24:43-44. The wording is identical except for three minor variations, NONE of which affect the sense, but one of which has a major impact on Tim’s translation and interpretation.

Matthew and Luke use different words for “this” in the first phrase, “*but know this.*” This does not affect the sense because the words are synonyms. They also use different words for “allowed,” again synonyms. But the one important distinction for this discussion is that they use different words for “therefore.” Instead of διὰ τοῦτο as in Matthew, Luke uses οὖν (oun). Οὖν is synonymous with διὰ τοῦτο and also means “for this reason,” or “therefore” as it is usually translated. Thayer lists the following senses for οὖν: “then, therefore, accordingly, consequently, these things being so.” The critical point is that there is no possible way to transform οὖν into “through this.” **Tim’s interpretation of this passage falls on this point.**

Grammatical Error 3: δοκέω (dokeo)

The third grammatical issue is also found in Verse 44. Tim translates the verse,

“Through this you also become ready, because you do not know which hour the Son of Man is coming.”

The word Tim renders “know” is the Greek word δοκέω. The problem is this word does not mean “to know.” Thayer defines this word as follows: “to be of the opinion, to think, to suppose.” It occurs 66 times in the New Testament and is never translated “know” in either the KJV, NKJV or the NASB. The NKJV correctly in translates this verse,

“Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

To summarize the grammatical errors in Tim’s translation of this crucial passage, he has used “to see” three times where he should have used “to know,” and he has used “to know” where he should have used “to expect.” He has also used the wrong tenses. And he has badly mistranslated the idiom which means “therefore.” In all of these mistakes, Tim has created new definitions and grammar rules that are contrary to every accepted grammar and lexicon. They are his own invention. Furthermore, his interpretation of the passage depends entirely on his translation. To a specialist in Greek grammar and exposition, these errors are fatal to the premise of his book. Tim’s translation is not more precise than “*virtually all English translations.*” It is less precise, less clear, and it is misleading. The NKJV, NASB, and even the NIV translations of this passage can all

be trusted by the English reader. I will now move on from the translation to review Tim's actual interpretation of this passage.

§A9: Tim's theory misinterprets the commands to be ready and to watch.

The Lord commanded us to "*be ready*" and to "*watch*"! Tim interprets the command to "be ready" as the process of doing the study and chronological research necessary to discover the time of Christ's return. He says that once this has been discovered, then we will know when to start watching. According to Tim, watching is not something to be done continually throughout the present age; rather, it is a command to be obeyed during the Tribulation. In Tim's theology, the indispensable virtue is **knowledge** and the fatal error is **ignorance**. Study and research result in knowledge, which constitutes being ready, which enables one to know when to begin watching. Here is Tim's explanation,

Notice carefully that this parable does not concern knowing the exact time, but knowing the timeframe (which watch). The term "watch" as a measurement of time refers to three-hour periods in which the night was divided so that the Roman soldiers could change shifts... Thus, in Jesus' parable, **the fault of the householder was his ignorance** of the three-hour timeframe in which the thief was coming, not the exact time of his arrival.

Also, notice the association between KNOWING and WATCHING. In Jesus' statement, **"watching" depends on first "knowing" the timeframe**. If the householder had known the timeframe (three-hour watch), he would have watched during it. And if he had watched, he would have avoided disaster by confronting the thief the moment of his arrival. **Knowing the timeframe is therefore a prerequisite to watching**. And watching is necessary to avoid the plundering of the house. The plundering of the house was the result of not knowing the timeframe, and therefore neglecting to watch during the critical three-hour period...

Since the disciples had not yet perceived when this timeframe of the tribulation events would occur, they too were vulnerable to the same kind of disaster...

Jesus then gave them this critical command: '*Through this* (that is, through this illustration) *you also become ready, because you do not know which hour the Son of Man is coming.*' Jesus commanded the disciples to use this parable as a mechanism to 'become ready.' He did not say 'be ready,' as many translations have it... It does not refer to continuing in a static state of readiness, but achieving something they did not yet possess. Jesus told them to achieve a state of readiness which they did not yet possess due to their incomplete knowledge. He meant that His followers must not be like this man (who did not know the timeframe in which the thief was coming; therefore he did not watch; therefore he suffered great loss). **To 'become ready' means to discover the timeframe of**

the tribulation events so that you know when to watch for His coming. (29-31)

There are at least seven problematic observations with this explanation.

Observation 1: Discovering the Specific Watch

Tim's argument attaches great importance to the Greek word φυλακή¹⁵ (phulake) in Matthew 24:43. He argues that the parable concerns knowing the "specific watch" which he interprets as the seven-year "timeframe" of the Tribulation.¹⁶ He concludes the discussion with this statement,

Thus, in Jesus' parable, the fault of the householder was his ignorance of the three-hour timeframe in which the thief was coming, not the exact time of his arrival." (29)

Tim's purpose in this line of reasoning is to claim that "watching" is only necessary during the "timeframe" of the Tribulation once we have determined when it will begin. It is easy to show that this conclusion is in error by pointing once again to the parallel passage in Luke 12. Luke records Jesus' words as follows,

³⁹ *But know this, that if the master of the house had known what **hour** the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.* ⁴⁰ *Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."* Luke 12

In Verse 39, where Matthew used the word φυλακή (watch), Luke used the word ὥρα (ora) meaning "hour." This proves that Jesus was not hinting about a "general timeframe" by means of the word φυλακή. In this context, φυλακή and ὥρα are synonymous.¹⁷ What this means is that the reference to a watch in the night does not have the significance that Tim attaches to it.

Observation 2: Sleeping Instead of Watching

According to Tim's reasoning, the homeowner in the parable did not need to watch continually. He could safely sleep. He only needed to be awake during the three hour watch during which he knew the thief was coming. Tim explicitly applies the illustration to us stating,

¹⁵ Defined by Thayer as "the time (of night) during which guard was kept, a watch i.e. the period of time during which a part of the guard were on duty, and at the end of which others relieved them." The Greeks and the Israelites originally had three watches during the night. The Roman custom was four watches each night.

¹⁶ I have already pointed out in §A7 that knowing the time of the Tribulation and knowing the time of Christ's Return are the same thing.

¹⁷ They are "synonymous" in the sense that their ranges of meaning overlap in this context. If this is not the case, then either Matthew or Luke made a mistake in recording what Jesus said.

“To ‘become ready’ means to discover the timeframe of the tribulation events so that you know when to watch for His coming.” (31)

According to his reasoning, continual watching is not being commanded nor is it necessary. In fact, it is impossible because, according to Tim, “*knowing the timeframe is prerequisite to watching.*” By this logic, it is permitted to “sleep” until the “timeframe” (the Tribulation) arrives. This reasoning is incongruent with the logic of the parable and also with the grammar. Let’s consider the logic of the parable first.

By definition, a parable is a simple story from everyday life that illustrates a spiritual truth. For a parable to have meaning for the people to whom it was spoken, the story it tells must be consistent with their experience. It must make sense. But how is the homeowner supposed to foresee when the thief will attempt to break in before it happens? In the real world, that obviously is not possible. That is the whole point of having multiple watches that continue throughout the entire night – because we don’t know. Tim’s reasoning defeats the point of the parable which is that the thief (Christ) could return during any of the four watches of the night, and we must be found watching, prepared, alert, and busy regardless of which watch it turns out to be.

Jesus uses two parables (the Servants Waiting for their Master to Return and the Thief in the Night) as recorded by Luke to illustrate this point. Please read Luke’s account with the surrounding context and ask, which interpretation best fits the Lord’s words? Is the Lord saying, “*You must discover which watch the master is coming so that you can wake up and be found watching during it,*” or is He saying, “*Be ready and watching during every watch because you don’t know during which one the master is coming*”? Here is Luke’s account.

³⁵ *“Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning;*

³⁶ *and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately.*

³⁷ *Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them.*

³⁸ *And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.*

³⁹ *But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.*

⁴⁰ *Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” Luke 12:35-40*

Verses 37-38 specifically say that His coming could be “*in the second watch or in the third watch,*” and that the servants will be blessed if they are found watching implying that they must watch all night long.

Now read Mark’s account asking the same question. Mark records the parable of the Servants Waiting for their Master to Return and makes the same point even more explicitly.

³² *“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.*

³³ *Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is.*

³⁴ *It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch.*

³⁵ *Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—*

³⁶ *lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. Mark 13:32-36*

Mark says that the Master could return “*in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning.*” That’s ALL FOUR watches. And we are commanded to watch ALL NIGHT LONG. Notice also in Verse 33 that Mark links the command to “watch” with the commands to “take heed” and to “pray.”

Now let’s consider the grammar in Luke 12. Verse 35 begins with a three-fold command ἑστῶσαν (estosan), translated “let you be.” The three-fold command is:

“Let your waist be girded...

“Let your lamps be burning...

“Let you yourselves be like men who are waiting...

In Verse 40, the Lord closes the paragraph with the command γίνεσθε (ginesthe), translated “be ready.”

“Therefore, you also be ready...”

Both of these commands are present imperatives in Greek. In Mark’s account, he records the threefold command to “take heed, watch,” and “pray.” All three commands are present imperatives. What is the significance of the present imperative? Here is Wallace’s explanation,

*“In the present, the force is generally **to command the action as an ongoing process...**¹⁸ The action may or may not have already begun. It may be progressive, iterative, or customary... The force here [Ingressive-Progressive] is **begin and continue**. It stresses both the inception and progress of an action.*

¹⁸ Wallace, page 485

The force of the customary present imperative is simply *continue*. It is a command for action to be continued, action that may or may not have already been going on. It is often a character-building command to the effect of “make this your habit,” “train yourself in this,” etc. This is the use of the present imperative in general precepts.”¹⁹

Tim writes, “*It does not refer to continuing in a static state of readiness...*” but that is exactly what it DOES refer to! According to the Greek grammars, that is precisely the force of the present imperative.

All of these facts (the sense of the parables, the present imperative commands, the specific statements) strongly imply that we must be ready and watching continually at all times. So how can Tim maintain that in the parable of the thief, “*the fault of the householder was his ignorance of the three-hour timeframe*”?

The implications of this are crucial and practical. Tim’s interpretation gives us permission to sleep up until the beginning of the Tribulation which he has calculated on our behalf. At that time, we must wake up and begin watching for the Lord’s return. But there is nothing in Jesus’ parables or commands that gives us permission to sleep. We are commanded to be ready and to watch continually.

Observation 3: The Association Between Knowing and Watching

Tim states that “*knowing the timeframe is therefore a prerequisite to watching.*” But the text places the association between “knowing” and “watching” in the exact opposite order of what Tim states.

“So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near.” Luke 21:31

We are commanded to watch continually because we do not know the time so that when the signs Jesus told us to look for begin to take place, then we will know that His coming is near. First the signs (for which we are watching) take place; when we see these signs, then we will know. The order could not be plainer. Knowing is therefore not a prerequisite to watching; knowing is the result of watching.

Observation 5: The Meaning of the Command to Watch

The word ἑτοιμος (etoimos), meaning “ready,” implies preparedness. The word γρηγορέω (gregoreo), meaning “to watch,” literally means “*to be awake*.” The NASB translates it, “*be on the alert*.” The word is found 23 times in the New Testament, eight of which are in this context. Thayer defines it as, “*to watch, give strict attention to, be cautious, be active.*” This definition certainly includes being on the lookout for the signs

¹⁹ Wallace, page 721-722

Jesus gave, but it also implies much more than that. It implies a mental and spiritual state of vigilance against all forms of temptation, deception, and spiritual danger. In other words, it is an **exhortation to perseverance**! This cannot be confined to the time of the Tribulation. Vigilance (watchfulness) must be practiced at all times because it is an essential component of continuing in the faith. We cannot be saved without watchfulness.

Observation 6: The Importance of Knowledge and Learning

Tim places great importance on the necessity of learning, study, research, and knowledge – specifically in the field of chronology. There is no such command in the context, but he infers it from the command to become ready. On the other hand, there is actually a direct command to learn something stated in the context. Here is Mark's account.

²⁸ “Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near—at the doors! Mark 13

The word for “learn,” μανθάνω (manthano), is defined by Thayer as “to learn, be apprised, to increase one’s knowledge, to hear, to be informed, to learn by use and practice.” This is a real command to increase learning, and no inference is necessary. It says nothing about chronological research. What we are to learn is what we have already stated repeatedly – that we will know when we see the signs happening.

Observation 7: The Apostles Commanded Us to Watch

Is there any way to be certain that Jesus was commanding His followers to continue in this constant state of vigilance, that is, to “watch,” during the entire age until He returns? Yes, there is.

Watchfulness DOES NOT depend on knowing the timeframe of the Lord’s return. It DOES depend on the expectation that His return – and the signs which precede His return – could be soon and therefore we must continually be ready and watching for those signs. And it DOES also depend on the conviction that His return will bring His judgment with its attendant rewards and punishments. This point can be proven simply by the fact that the apostles referred to these words of Christ and repeatedly used them to exhort their followers to “watch” even though they had no idea when the Lord would return. Here is one example.

¹¹ And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

¹² The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of

darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

¹³ *Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.*

¹⁴ *But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.* Romans 13

One could argue that Paul was simply mistaken in this passage.²⁰ The Lord did not return just after Paul wrote this. So was Paul waking up the Romans too early? Should he have allowed them to sleep in a little longer? Or did Paul understand Jesus perfectly that we must watch all night long until the Master returns?

Tim misinterprets Jesus' commands to "watch" and to "be ready." His interpretation is inconsistent with the logic and the grammar of the passage. It also contradicts the apostles' interpretation of Jesus words and gives us permission to sleep when we should be awake and alert. Paul understood Christ to have warned us to watch all night long, and so should we.

§A10: Tim's theory misinterprets who the recipients are of the commands to watch and be ready.

Tim's premise is that when Jesus commands us to "*watch*" and to "*become ready*" we are meant to discover the timeframe of the Tribulation by means of historical, chronological research. Operating on that premise, Tim states that these commands were not intended for the apostles or for Christians generally. They were only intended for the last generation of pastors present in the world immediately prior to the Lord's return. Those pastors who are "wise" will discover the time in advance. The rest will all be condemned as unbelievers. Tim writes,

He has given us in Scripture all of the necessary information to know when it will occur. According to Daniel, it will be uncovered at the proper time to the "wise" who will understand and prepare. (24)

The time of Christ's return was to be revealed at some point just prior to the end, and the wise will indeed understand. [Footnote: The Hebrew word translated "wise" actually means "perceptive."] (25)

In the verses which immediately follow, Jesus spoke about His servants whom the Master puts in charge of His other servants, '*to give them their food at the proper time.*' What food? He had just commanded them to discover the timeframe of the tribulation events! Thus, if the servants who have been charged with feeding Christ's flock do as Jesus commanded, and they actually discover the critical information in time to prepare their subordinates, (to give them their proper food at the proper time), they will be blessed by the Lord when He returns.

²⁰ Tim argues exactly that in Chapter 3 of *Time of the End!*

Luke's parallel account makes it quite clear that Jesus was addressing these two parables to future Christian pastors and elders who would be charged with shepherding Christ's flock. (31)

I believe I have already shown that Christ gave no such command. But it is this premise that Tim is still following as he deals with Luke 12.

Upon hearing Jesus' parable of the man surprised by the thief, and Jesus' command to 'become ready,' Peter asked Him a critical question. '*Lord, do You speak this parable only to us, or to all?*' Peter wanted to know whether Jesus' parable was meant generally, that each of Christ's followers must discern the time for himself, or specifically for the twelve disciples. Jesus' answer to Peter's question was, neither. It was for the future pastors and elders who would be appointed to shepherd Jesus Christ's congregations at some time in the future."

Luke 12:42

*And the Lord said, 'Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master **will make ruler over his household**, to give them their portion of food in due season?*

Jesus' answer speaks of future appointments of "rulers"... His command to discover the timeframe was neither for the Apostles nor for Christians in general. It was for future pastors and elders... But, the "*faithful and wise stewards*" will heed Jesus' parable. They will discern the timeframe of the tribulation events and will give His other servants under their care the necessary food at the proper time. And when Jesus returns, He will make them "*ruler over all that he has...*" The servant who says, "*My Master is delaying His coming*" is the Christian pastor who does not heed Jesus' warning. He refuses to discern the time of tribulation in advance and prepare the flock under his care... This Christian pastor is condemned for not knowing when the Master is coming." (31-33)

Tim says that these commands were not given to either the apostles nor to Christians in general. They were given to a future generation of "faithful and wise stewards" who will discover the time of the end.²¹

The first thing to note in this regard is that Tim contradicts all of this later in Chapter 3. In Chapter 3 he argues that the apostles did, in fact, calculate the time of Christ's return and they passed this knowledge onto the next generation orally, rather than in writing. He writes,

²¹ Tim never explicitly states to whom this refers, but in view of the contents of his book it is obvious that he believes he and those associated with him are fulfilling this and he expects to be "*made ruler over all that He has*" in reward. He equally expects that those Christian pastors who disbelieve his book will be condemned as unbelievers.

In the first chapter, we examined Jesus' instructions to those whom He would appoint over His flock, to discover the time of His coming. He used the hypothetical parable of a man caught off guard by the 'thief in the night.' Had he known the time the thief was coming, he would have watched and avoided disaster. Watching was something that one could only do once he knew the time. Jesus then told them, "*Through this [the parable of the man surprised by the thief] you also become ready, because you do not know which hour the Son of Man is coming.*"

Did the Apostles obey Jesus' command? Did they 'become ready' by discovering the time of Jesus' coming? Did they transmit this critical information to their hearers orally? The answer is yes. Both Peter and Paul referred to Jesus' parable of the thief in the night, and in both cases they were reminding their readers of their prior oral teaching – teaching which has not been written down. (79)

Tim does not explain this contradiction. It appears that he must have changed his mind between the time when he wrote Chapters 1 and 3. Apparently he also believes that the apostles did the work of calculating the time, but since it was not written down, the information has been lost until Tim's recent rediscovery of it.

In any case, Tim is wrong when he writes "*His command to discover the timeframe was neither for the Apostles nor for Christians in general. It was for future pastors and elders*" because in Mark's account of this discourse we read explicitly,

³² *"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.*

³³ *Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is.*

³⁴ *It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch.*

³⁵ *Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—*

³⁶ *lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.*

³⁷ **And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!**" Mark 13.

The command to ALL of us is to watch and to be ready.

§A11: in support of his interpretation of Matthew 24, Tim makes an inaccurate claim to historical precedent.

Tim frequently directs contemptuous language towards other teachers and this is evident in this next paragraph. This does not actually add any weight to his arguments. However, that is not the real problem in this paragraph. The real problem is a false historical claim. He writes,

“‘No one knows’ does not necessarily mean ‘no one can ever know,’ as we have been led to believe by the prophecy talking heads. The misrepresentation of this passage comes from both pretribulationists (whose entire eschatological system depends on the ‘rapture’ being ‘imminent’) and amillennialists (who also teach an ‘imminent’ end of the world). **The modern understanding of this verse** is supposed to prove that Jesus’ coming could occur at any moment. Yet, this is a completely unbiblical view, since the very same passage places Christ’s coming after a long sequence of signs...” (26)

The real problem here is the subtle logical fallacy, *argumentum ad antiquitatis* (appeal to antiquity), when he refers to “*the modern understanding of this verse.*” Tim does not explicitly say that his interpretation of the passage is in line with the early Christian understanding of it, but that is certainly implied when he refers to “*the modern understanding*” and the “*misrepresentations*” by “*the talking heads.*” The impression given is that he is defending the ancient interpretation of this passage against modern corruptions. Of course, this argument would have weight ***if it were true***. It is certainly correct that the ECFs believed that Christ’s coming would take place after a series of signs; they were post-tribulationists. But that is NOT what Tim is arguing for.²²

It is to be noted that while Tim subtly claims to be the defender of the pristine interpretation of this passage, **he never cites any passages from the ECFs in which they quote this passage**. Even in Chapter 2 (“Early Christian Eschatology”), he never offers any examples where the ECFs quote these passages and that is surprising because they quote it dozens of times. The truth is, none of the ECFs interpreted these passages the way Tim does. His interpretation is unique. But since he has subtly claimed to hold the historical high ground, the following quotations are provided to demonstrate that this claim is false.

Irenaeus

Observe how Irenaeus quotes Luke 21:34-35.

And therefore did the Lord say to His disciples, to make us become good workmen: Take heed to yourselves, and watch continually upon every occasion, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day shall come upon you unawares; for as a snare shall it come upon all dwelling upon the face of the earth. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book IV, Chapter 36

The clause “...*and watch continually upon every occasion...*” is not in any manuscript of Luke. It could have been in a manuscript known to Irenaeus, but it is more likely that

²² See §A6 *Bait and Switch*. All post-tribulationists (ancient and modern) believe that Christ will come after a series of signs during the Tribulation. But what distinguishes Tim’s interpretation is the idea that the time of the end can be discovered independently from those signs through chronological research.

Irenaeus added this expression as an interpretive comment to the command, “*take heed to yourselves*.” Either way, he understood the command to watch as something to be obeyed continually at all times, and not as something that was dependent on first calculating the time.

In the next quotation, we gain further insight into Irenaeus’ understanding to the command to watch.

For when men sleep, the enemy sows the material of tares; and for this cause did the Lord command His disciples to be on the watch. And again, those persons who are not bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, and are, as it were, covered over and **lost among brambles**, if they use diligence, and receive the word of God as a graft, arrive at the pristine nature of man—that which was created after the image and likeness of God. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book V, Chapter 10

This further demonstrates that Irenaeus regarded watchfulness as a command to be obeyed at all times. It also demonstrates that his understanding of the nature of this command is integral to perseverance.

The next quotation from Irenaeus pertains to the central purpose of Tim’s book, that of knowing the day and hour of Christ’s return.

But, beyond reason inflated [with your own wisdom], ye presumptuously maintain that ye are acquainted with the unspeakable mysteries of God; while even the Lord, the very Son of God, allowed that the Father alone knows the very day and hour of judgment, when He plainly declares, “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, neither the Son, but the Father only.” If, then, the Son was not ashamed to ascribe the knowledge of that day to the Father only, but declared what was true regarding the matter, neither let us be ashamed to reserve for God those greater questions which may occur to us. For no man is superior to his master. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book II, Chapter 28

Evidently, Irenaeus did not approve of any claim to know the day of Christ’s return and he regarded any such claim as setting oneself superior to the Son of God.

How did Irenaeus interpret the “*faithful and wise steward*”? Tim defines this as a reference to those pastors in the last generation who calculate the date of Christ’s return by means of chronology. Here is Irenaeus’ definition.

Such presbyters does the Church nourish, of whom also the prophet says: “I will give thy rulers in peace, and thy bishops in righteousness.” Of whom also did the Lord declare, “Who then shall be a faithful steward (*actor*), good and wise, whom the Lord sets over His household, to give them their meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing.”

Paul then, teaching us where one may find such, says, “God hath placed in the Church, first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers.” Where, therefore, the gifts of the Lord have been placed, there it behoves us to learn the truth, [namely,] from those who possess that succession of the Church which is from the apostles, and among whom exists that which is sound and blameless in conduct, as well as that which is unadulterated and incorrupt in speech. For these also preserve this faith of ours in one God who created all things; and they increase that love [which we have] for the Son of God, who accomplished such marvellous dispensations for our sake: and they expound the Scriptures to us without danger, neither blaspheming God, nor dishonouring the patriarchs, nor despising the prophets. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book IV, Chapter 26

According to this interpretation, a “faithful and wise steward” is one who, (i) is sound and blameless in conduct, (ii) is incorrupt in speech, (iii) preserves the faith, (iv) increases love for Christ, and (v) expounds the Scriptures without danger, blasphemy, or dishonor. Irenaeus continues the same matter by next defining for us the reference to “*the evil servant*.”

Those, however, who are believed to be presbyters by many, but serve their own lusts, and, do not place the fear of God supreme in their hearts, but conduct themselves with contempt towards others, and are puffed up with the pride of holding the chief seat, and work evil deeds in secret, saying, “No man sees us,” shall be convicted by the Word, who does not judge after outward appearance (*secundum gloriam*), nor looks upon the countenance, but the heart... Of whom also did the Lord say: “But if the evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite the man-servants and maidens, and to eat and drink and be drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day that he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book IV, Chapter 26

The “evil servant,” according to this interpretation, is a presbyter who (i) serves his own lusts, (ii) does not fear God, (iii) conducts himself with contempt towards others, (iv) is puffed up with pride, and (v) does evil in secret.

Tertullian

The next quotation demonstrates how Tertullian understood the references to not knowing the day nor the hour.

Accordingly, God’s judgment will be more full and complete, because it will be pronounced at the very last, in an eternal irrevocable sentence, both of punishment and of consolation, (on men whose) souls are not to transmigrate into beasts, but are to return into their own proper bodies. And all this once for all, and on “that day, too, of which the Father only knoweth;” (only knoweth,) in

order that by her trembling expectation faith may make full trial of her anxious sincerity, keeping her gaze ever fixed on that day, in her perpetual ignorance of it, daily fearing that for which she yet daily hopes. Tertullian, *A Treatise On the Soul*, Chapter XXXIII

Tertullian had the same understanding as Irenaeus, and regarded it as the essential character of faith to maintain our gaze and our hope fixed on that day in spite of our “perpetual ignorance of it.”

Didache

This next quotation from the Didache regards watchfulness.

Watch for your life's sake. Let not your lamps be quenched, nor your loins unloosed; but be ye ready, for ye know not the hour in which our Lord cometh. But often shall ye come together, seeking the things which are befitting to your souls: for the whole time of your faith will not profit you, if ye be not made perfect in the last time. *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, Chapter 16, Watchfulness

And similarly, this quotation is from the Constitutions of the Holy Apostles.

Observe all things that are commanded you by the Lord. Be watchful for your life. “Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye like unto men who wait for their Lord, when He will come, at even, or in the morning, or at cock-crowing, or at midnight. For at what hour they think not, the Lord will come; and if they open to Him, blessed are those servants, because they were found watching. For He will gird Himself, and will make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.” Watch therefore, and pray, that ye do not sleep unto death. For your former good deeds will not profit you, if at the last part of your life you go astray from the true faith. *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, Book VII, Chapter 31

Cyprian

These last two quotations are from Cyprian and demonstrate how he interpreted these passages.

Let us, beloved brethren, arouse ourselves as much as we can; and breaking the slumber of our ancient listlessness, let us be watchful to observe and to do the Lord's precepts. Let us be such as He Himself has bidden us to be, saying, “Let your loins be girt, and your lamps burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when He shall come from the wedding, that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open to Him. Blessed are those servants whom their Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching.” We ought to be girt about, lest, when the day of setting forth comes, it should find us burdened and entangled. Let our light shine in good works, and glow in such wise as to lead us from the night of

this world to the daylight of eternal brightness. Let us always with solicitude and caution wait for the sudden coming of the Lord, that when He shall knock, our faith may be on the watch, and receive from the Lord the reward of our vigilance. If these commands be observed, if these warnings and precepts be kept, we cannot be overtaken in slumber by the deceit of the devil; but we shall reign with Christ in His kingdom as servants that watch. The Treatises of Cyprian, Treatise I, *On the Unity of the Church*, Chapter 27

Moreover, in the Gospel the Lord speaks, and says: "He that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved." And again: "If ye shall abide in my word, ye shall be my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Moreover, forewarning us that we ought always to be ready, and to stand firmly equipped and armed, He adds, and says: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord when he shall return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh they may open unto him. Blessed are those servants whom their lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Treatises of Cyprian, Treatise XI, *On the Exhortation to Martyrdom*, Chapter 8

These quotations are not exhaustive, but they are sufficient to prove that Tim is not defending the ancient interpretation of these passages. Tim's interpretation is unique in the history of the church. According to Irenaeus' interpretation of this passage, those who sleep instead of continually watching, either because of a lack of diligence or because of a failure to understand the command, are "**lost among brambles**."

§A12: Tim's theory requires a doubtful interpretation of Acts 1:6-8.

I would like to now make reference to Tim's treatment of Acts 1:6-8 on the AiR forum²³ which I mentioned at the beginning of this review and show that he has misinterpreted this passage also. The passage reads,

⁶ *Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"*

⁷ *And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.*

⁸ *But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

Tim was asked about this passage on the AiR forum. He gave the following reply.

First, the clause in question is:

Οὐχ ὑμῶν ἐστὶν γινῶναι χρόνους ἢ καιροὺς

²³ The AiR (Answers In Revelation) website and forum have since been taken offline.

The NKJV renders it as "*It is not **FOR** you to know times or seasons.*"

The preposition "for" is not in the Greek text, but was supplied by the translators. In Greek, frequently prepositions are not stated but implied. The choice of type of preposition intended by the speaker is indicated by the case of the object. The prepositional object is "you." The speaker could have used either the genitive case 'you' (ὁμῶν) or the dative case 'you' (ὁμῖν).

When implying a preposition, an object in the dative case indicates motion towards the object as being a recipient of something (to you; unto you, for you, towards you), compare Mark 4:11 for a good example of a dative case 'you.' On the other hand, genitive case objects take prepositions that have the opposite implication, (from you, of you, out of you) pointing to the source as being you.

Since Jesus chose to use ὁμῶν (genitive case 'you') the correct choice of preposition should be from prepositions that normally take genitive case objects (such as of, from, out of) pointing to 'you' as the source of the knowledge.

What this means is that IF Jesus had intended to indicate that the knowledge was not to be **GIVEN TO** the Apostles, he would have used the dative case 'you' (ὁμῖν). But because He used the genitive case 'you' (ὁμῶν), the implication is that the knowledge of the date of His coming was not to be discovered by them.

This is actually solid support for some of the points in my book. For example, in the parable of the servants.

Luke 12:37-44

37 "Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them.

38 "And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

39 "But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.

40 "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

41 Then Peter said to Him, "**Lord, do You speak this parable only to us [the disciples], or to all people?**"

42 And the Lord said, "**Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master WILL make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?**"

43 "**Blessed is that servant** whom his master will find so doing when he comes.

44 "Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has.

This parable is fascinating because of Peter's question and Jesus' answer. Peter wanted to know whether the instructions to figure out the time of Jesus' coming was intended for the disciples/Apostles OR for all who heard. Instead, Jesus' answer was basically NEITHER. It was for those whom the Master WILL (future) place over his other servants. That is, the future pastors of local churches. By saying this, Jesus actually excluded His own Apostles from those who should consider it their duty to discover the time of His coming. And this fits perfectly with Acts 1:7.

The disciples did indeed eventually understand the PROCESS necessary to discover the time -- the six millennia from creation, as indicated in Hebrews 4 and 2 Peter. However, as far as we can tell, they never took up the task of reconstructing a chronology of the Bible as the means of following this process to a conclusion in order to discover the date.

Once again, there is confusion because of the contradiction here and with what Tim wrote in Chapter 3 where he states that the apostles DID discover the time. The source of the confusion and of the contradiction is Tim's claim that the Lord gave "instructions to figure out the time of Jesus' coming." There is no such command which I hopefully have demonstrated. But what about Tim's comments about Acts 1 and the genitive case?

What Tim is appealing to here is a category of the genitive case called *Genitive of Source or Origin*. Wallace says, "*this is a rare category in Koine Greek*." Wallace continues,

Again, as with the genitive of separation, the simple genitive is being replaced in Koine Greek by a prepositional phrase (in this instance, ἐκ + gen.) to indicate source. This corresponds to the fact that source is an emphatic idea: emphasis and explicitness often go hand in hand. Since this usage is not common, it is not advisable to seek it as the most likely one for a particular genitive that may fit under another label.²⁴

In fact, it fits well under the single most common label, which is "*Genitive of Possession*." This means that the noun in the genitive case (in this case the pronoun "you") possesses the noun it modifies (in this case "to know.") Thus, the meaning is simply that Jesus was telling the Apostles that the knowledge of the "*times and seasons*" does not belong to you. This interpretation is confirmed by the last half of the sentence, "...*which the Father has put in His own authority*." The times and seasons are under the Father's authority and the knowledge of them **belongs only to Him**.

In making this statement, Jesus was simply echoing what He had already told them previously: "*But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father*" (Mark 13:32). Even the Son does not possess this knowledge.

§A13: We would do well to consider the historical precedent of 70 A.D.

Tim began this chapter attempting to find a historical precedent in the First Advent of Christ and the supposed failure of the Jews to discern the exact year of His crucifixion based on the prophecy of Daniel. I critiqued his treatment of that historical context in subsections §A2 - §A5. There is an even more applicable and direct historical precedent – the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. – which we would do well to consider.

The *Olivet Discourse* contains two prophecies of events, one of which foreshadows the other. The destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in A.D. 70 foreshadows the siege of Jerusalem that will occur at the Second Coming of Christ. These two prophecies are

²⁴ Wallace, pp. 107-109

so closely associated that it is easy to confuse them. Both events are preceded by signs for which the disciples were commanded to watch and both contain a command to flee.

The first event was fulfilled only 40 years after the Olivet Discourse. Were the disciples given any information about the timing of that event or any mechanism for calculating when it would occur? Or were they only instructed to watch for a sign? These questions are pertinent. We read this in Luke 21,

²⁰ “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. ²¹ Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her *depart*, and let not those who are in the country enter her. ²² For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. ²³ But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. ²⁴ And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

There is no information in the context to indicate that this event would be fulfilled exactly 40 years in the future. There is only this instruction: “**When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know... then flee!**” This is identical to the command we have for the Second Coming of Christ.

We know from historical sources²⁵ that the Christians obeyed these instructions, so that by the time of its final overthrow,²⁶ some or all of the Christians had departed from Jerusalem.

The events of 70 A.D. provide us with an important historical precedent that we dare not miss. It is not necessary to know the time of the end in order to watch for the signs. The order is maintained, “**when you see... then you will know.**”

Section A Conclusion

The first chapter of Tim’s book undertook two tasks. The first was to prove that the knowledge of the day of Christ’s return is knowledge that we are intended to discover. The second was to overcome the objection that several passages appear to state explicitly that this knowledge is out of our reach, and even out of Christ’s reach. To accomplish this, Tim examined the historical setting of Christ’s first coming; he

²⁵ Eusebius, Epiphanius Bishop of Salamis, and Remigius Bishop of Reims.

²⁶ Historical evidence suggests that the Christians fled the city between A.D. 66-69. For reference, see Scott, J. Julius, *Did Jerusalem Christians Flee to Pella?* Paper presented at Archaeology Conference, Wheaton College, 1998.

retranslated Matthew 24:36-44; and he offered his interpretation of Jesus' words in the Olivet Discourse.

I reviewed this presentation and enumerated several problems. I found grammatical, logical, historical, and exegetical errors in Tim's treatment of several passages. He misrepresents or at least misunderstands the reasons why the first century Jews did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah and were condemned. He appears to be unaware of the multiple theories that existed in the first century to interpret Daniel's prophecy or of the inherent difficulties in doing so. In faulting the first century Jews, he does not appreciate the significance of the fact that the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ were a mystery in the Old Testament Scriptures.

In the key passage of Matthew 24, he retranslates the passage making multiple, critical, grammatical errors. In my critique of his exposition, I have quoted and referenced Greek grammars and lexicons several times and will do so again in the next section. The reason I do this is not to boast about the number of books in my library. Neither Tim nor I grew up speaking 1st century Koine Greek. We learned it the same way, by studying the grammars and lexicons of scholars in the field. When I quote them it is to show that the grammatical rules and definitions of words I am following are well established parts of the technical literature and are not just my opinions. Of course, it is possible for the reference works to be in error, but I believe that when an interpreter goes against ALL of these references he owes his reader a compelling argument why. Many of Tim's readers might take it for granted that "he knows Greek" and therefore must be on solid ground. They have no way of knowing when he is going rogue.

Finally, Tim misinterprets the commands to *be ready* and to *watch* in a way that makes no sense in the context of the parable, has no historical precedent, and is demonstrably foreign to the text. Having analyzed his exposition to the best of my ability, I am not convinced that Tim has been able to "*clear the most important major hurdle*" to use his own metaphor.

Section B

The More Sure Prophetic Word

In Section A, I reviewed Chapter 1 of Tim's book in which he presented his case that knowledge of the day of Christ's second coming can be – and must be – discovered. In Section B, I will review Chapter 3 and part of Chapter 7 (pages 179-182) of his book in which he presents the doctrinal foundation for the discovery of this knowledge, namely "chiliasm," or the "Millennial Week," from the Scriptures.

A Bird's Eye View

The discussion Tim lays out in this chapter is long and complex. So before going into the nuts and bolts of his exposition of specific passages, Subsections §B1 – §B3 will take a "bird's eye view" of the chapter. It is easy to get lost in the details of theological discussions and lose sight of the bigger picture. I wish to point out what I see as the main thrust of his arguments and their results. That is more important in my opinion than how he handles any single passage.

§B1: Tim faces twin difficulties in making a scriptural argument – a lack of evidence and an abundance of evidence.

Tim faces two difficulties with laying out a scriptural case for the Millennial Week. The first is the absence of supporting evidence. The second is the abundance of contradictory evidence.

First Difficulty

The Early Church Fathers (ECFs) who held to chiliasm were able to state the Millennial Week doctrine clearly and concisely. Irenaeus stated it in these few words: "*For in as many days as this world was made, in so many thousand years shall it be concluded.*" That is an explicit and unambiguous statement of the entire doctrine in only 19 words. In seeking to find the Millennial Week taught in Scripture, we would like to find at least one statement this clear and explicit. But there is no such statement anywhere in Scripture. Tim acknowledges the apparent weakness of the scriptural case and writes,

Many writers mentioned it [the Millennial Week] as a fact, but none gave a very full explanation of the biblical support for such a calendar. The primary justification offered was the claim that the creation week was both history and prophecy, and that God reckoned a day as a thousand years based on Psalm 90:4, cited by Peter in 2 Peter 3:8-10... Why would the early Christians so

universally accept this as fact on such apparently flimsy evidence? It is not readily apparent that the seven days of creation in Genesis are both history and a prophetic pattern. The statement in the Psalms, that a day with God is as a thousand years, is insufficient evidence in itself for such a theory. (73)

It is NOT true that the ECFs failed to give a full explanation for the biblical support for this doctrine. As we will see later in Section D, the ECFs cited extensive Scriptural support for the doctrine from every part of the Bible and from nearly every book in the Bible, but Tim ignores almost all of the arguments they advanced. The only scriptural support that Tim is willing to borrow from the ECFs is their use of the creation week and Psalm 90:4. Instead of using the biblical arguments that the ECFs advanced – most likely because those arguments are embarrassing – Tim instead attempts to build a new scriptural case which is entirely inferred from indirect statements.

Tim acknowledges that this Scriptural evidence is “*flimsy*.” He nevertheless goes on to claim that the origin of this teaching was the Apostles. He writes,

To understand the creation week to be prophecy, one needs the teaching of the Apostles in the New Testament. (78)

But when one searches the New Testament Scriptures, one still does not find any clear, explicit statement of this doctrine. This by itself is a huge stumbling block for Bible believers who desire to use the Scriptures alone for our faith and practice. But as challenging as this difficulty is, the next one is even more formidable.

Second Difficulty

The absence of any direct statements in Scripture teaching the Millennial Week does not mean that the Scriptures are silent on the subject of when the Lord will return. There is plenty of scriptural evidence; the problem is, **the evidence is contrary to the Millennial Week.**

The apostles wrote their Epistles with the conviction that we are now in “*the last days*”²⁷ and the Advent of Christ and His Kingdom is “*at hand*.”²⁸ This has been the case for the entire age since the first coming of Christ. Consequently, the apostles taught with the expectation that the events of the Tribulation – followed by the Lord’s return – could be fulfilled within the lifetime of their readers. This conviction was true in the generation of the apostles and has remained true for every generation since the apostles. It remains true today. The Lord could come in our lifetime.

²⁷ The expression “the Last Days” is commonly used in popular prophecy discussions to express a belief that eschatological events have in recent times become “impending,” usually in association with some political development. But the biblical expression “the Last Days” refers to the entire age between the First and Second Advent of Christ. Acts 2:17-18; Hebrews 1:2; James 5:3; 1 John 2:18

²⁸ Romans 13:12; Philippians 4:5; James 5:8; 1 Peter 4:7; Revelation 22:10

That truth directly contradicts the Millennial Week which necessarily places the Second Coming almost 2,000 years in the future from the generation of the apostles. These two things cannot both be true. At the time of the apostles, it cannot be true that the Lord could have returned in that generation and simultaneously be true that His return was impossible for another 2,000 years. So either the apostles were mistaken, or the Millennial Week is a false doctrine. Tim's view is that the apostles were mistaken, at least initially.

Here are a few passages that demonstrate the apostles' expectation. Paul wrote this to the church at Rome,

¹¹ And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

¹² The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Romans 13

The language of this passage is taken from the *Olivet Discourse* (Matthew 24). The expression "*it is high time to awake out of sleep*" is literally, "*it is already the hour to awake from sleep.*" The "hour" is an allusion to Jesus' words in the Parable of the Master of the House (Matthew 24:43) who did not know the hour the thief would come. The word "*awake*" is taken from the same passage and Jesus' command to "*watch.*" The word "*watch*" is the same word and means "*to stay awake.*" Paul was commanding the Romans to watch, saying that it is now the hour when we must be watching in obedience to the Lord's command.

Another example is Paul's letter to the church at Thessalonica.

*15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that **we who are alive and remain** until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then **we who are alive and remain** shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words. 1 Thessalonians 4*

In this passage, Paul is clearly holding out the possibility that he and his readers would live to see the Second Coming of Christ. And again in 1 Thessalonians,

² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. ³ For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. ⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. ⁵ You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. ⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are

drunk at night. ⁸ *But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.* ⁹ *For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,* ¹⁰ *who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.* 1

Thessalonians 5

The language of this passage is obviously taken from the *Olivet Discourse*. Paul assumes that he and his readers might live to see the events of the Great Tribulation and the Second Coming. At the same time, he acknowledges in Verse 10 that they might NOT live to see those events with these crucial words, “*whether we wake or sleep,*” that is, whether we are still alive or have already died.

Why did Paul add these words? Because he did not know the day nor the hour when the Lord would come but he believed that it could be in his lifetime. The addition of these words proves that Paul was not writing these things carelessly but rather intentionally and carefully. There are many other passages like this in Paul’s Epistles.²⁹

Paul is not the only New Testament author who writes in this manner. We read this in James,

⁷ Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. ⁸ You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. ⁹ Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! James 5

And we read this in Peter,

But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. 1 Peter 4:7

There are so many passages like this that this constitutes a **major Bible doctrine**. Since the First Advent of Christ, we have been living in the Last Days. In any generation during this age, it has been possible and it remains possible for the Lord to return.

In summary, the Scriptural Evidence results in two difficulties for this doctrine. (i) We find no explicit statements or direct evidence that the apostles taught it. (ii) We also find the opposite of the Millennial Week; namely, a firm conviction and expectation that the Lord’s coming could be within the lifetime of the readers. These twin difficulties together constitute an immense obstacle to the Millennial Week teaching. How does Tim deal with this obstacle?

²⁹ See for examples 1 Corinthians 1:7-8; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 1 Timothy 6:13-16; Titus 2:11-14

§B2: The methods Tim uses to explain these difficulties are incompatible with a belief in inerrancy of Scripture.

Tim deals with this obstacle by means of two assertions. Against the first difficulty he asserts that, (i) the absence of any clear Scriptural statement does not prove the apostles didn't teach this doctrine because the vast majority of the apostles' teaching was oral and never written down. Furthermore, we have no record of the teachings of most of the apostles. This is an argument from silence. Against the second difficulty he asserts, (ii) the expectation that the Lord could return within the lifetime of the apostles or of their readers was a mistaken idea only expressed in the early epistles. This expectation was later abandoned as evidenced by a "*changing tone regarding expectancy*."

Tim alleges that the Millennial Week doctrine was a later revelation that was given to the apostles shortly before the deaths of Peter and Paul and consequently not recorded in any of the New Testament books except for traces of the doctrine which he infers from three of the epistles. When, how, and to whom this revelation was first given is obviously not recorded in Scripture and Tim never offers a theory of when or how it was given. As evidence for this new revelation Tim asserts there was a "*changing tone*" wherein the early epistles reflect an expectation that the Lord could come within that generation, but in their later epistles, the apostles understood there would be a long delay.³⁰ He writes,

We know that the Apostles spent their lives teaching the early Christians the things Jesus taught, and the things progressively revealed to them by the Holy Spirit after Jesus' ascension. The vast majority of the Apostles' teaching was oral, and never written down. And there is no record of the oral teaching of most of the Apostles. The New Testament only contains small fragments of the teaching and preaching of a few of Jesus' apostles, primarily Peter, John, and Paul. (78)

No doubt many readers of this book are wondering how the early Christians could hold to a Millennial Week chronology, which would put the second coming

³⁰ It might be helpful to the reader to include a list of the New Testament Books and the approximate A.D. dates when each was written. The following list is representative of several sources for this information.

James - 44-49

Galatians - 49-50

Matthew - 50-60

Mark - 50-60

1 Thessalonians - 51

2 Thessalonians - 51-52

1 Corinthians - 55

2 Corinthians - 55-56

Romans - 56

Luke - 60-61

Ephesians - 60-62

Philippians - 60-62

Philemon - 60-62

Colossians - 60-62

Acts - 62

1 Timothy - 62-64

Titus - 62-64

1 Peter - 64-65

2 Timothy - 66-67

2 Peter - 67-68

Hebrews - 67-69

Jude - 68-70

John - 80-90

1 John - 90-95

2 John - 90-95

3 John - 90-95

Revelation - 94-96

of Christ almost two millennia in the future. Some of the New Testament's earlier books seem to indicate an expectancy of Christ's return in the lifetimes of the first century Christians. For example, Paul's statement that "*we who are alive and remain*" at the coming of the Lord could imply that he expected to see Christ's return." (179)

We must not lose sight of the fact that the Apostles themselves were progressively learning from the Holy Spirit throughout their entire ministries... (179)

The progressive nature of the Apostles' own learning, as reflected in the changing tone of their epistles regarding expectancy, strongly suggests that the Millennial Week concept was not known to the apostles until shortly before Peter's and Paul's deaths around AD 66-67... The New Testament books which support chiliasm's Millennial Week are only those written shortly before the deaths of Peter and Paul – Hebrews and 2 Peter – and of course, Revelation. (181)

Tim theorizes that the apostles received the new revelation of the Millennial Week after the writing of 1 Peter in 64-65 AD and before the writing of 2 Timothy, 2 Peter, and Hebrews, and before the deaths of Peter and Paul in 66-67 AD. This leaves an extremely short window of opportunity (somewhere between a few months and a couple of years) between the receiving of the new revelation and their deaths. There is no record in Scripture of this new revelation. But assuming it happened, what did the apostles do with this remaining time? They composed three epistles in which they neither recorded nor expounded on this new revelation. On what else did they spend their short remaining time? According to Tim, they calculated the date of Christ's return. He writes,

In the first chapter, we examined Jesus' instructions to those whom He would appoint over His flock, to discover the time of His coming. He used the hypothetical parable of a man caught off guard by the "thief in the night." Had he known the time the thief was coming, he would have watched and avoided disaster. Watching was something that one could only do once he knew the time...

Did the Apostles obey Jesus' command? Did they "become ready" by discovering the time of Jesus' coming? Did they transmit this critical information to their hearers orally? The answer is yes. Both Peter and Paul referred to Jesus' parable of the thief in the night, and in both cases they were reminding their readers of their prior oral teaching – teaching which has not been written down. (79)

This claim evokes many questions. If it is true that the apostles spent this time calculating (correctly, one would assume) the time of Christ's return, and if it is true that

they passed this information to the next generation orally, then it is fair to ask the following questions.

- i. Were the apostles using the Greek Septuagint or a Hebrew text for the genealogical information?³¹
- ii. When the Millennial Week was revealed to them, did God not also reveal to them that they must use the Hebrew text because the Septuagint has incorrect data?
- iii. If they did calculate the correct date from the Hebrew, did they transmit the results to the next generation or did they instruct them to “do your own work”?
- iv. Why did the ECFs invariably use the Septuagint which Tim claims has incorrect data and leads to the wrong date for Christ’s coming by more than 1,500 years?
- v. Why is there neither in Scripture nor in any of the ECF writings any reference to the revelation of this truth to the apostles nor any reference to this massive apostolic research project to calculate the date of Christ’s coming?

Tim never gives an explanation of *why* the apostles did not write down this teaching even after they received the revelation; he simply declares that they did not do so. But the fact that they did not write it down does not diminish its importance. He maintains that it is “*critically important*” information and that it is “*necessary*” to ensure that we will have an “*abundant entrance*” into the Kingdom. He writes,

Peter’s second epistle was a reminder of previous apostolic oral preaching. Peter deemed his last words to be critically important for his readers. This epistle was merely a brief reminder of all the oral apostolic preaching. And this preaching was necessary to ensure “*an abundant entrance into the age enduring Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.*” (80)

It seems to me that given the very short period of time remaining until their deaths is all the more reason, not less, to write this down, especially considering the need to correct all their earlier epistles which emphasized the possibility that Christ could return within that generation. So how are we supposed to access this “*critically important*” information if the apostles did not write it down? According to Tim, the next generation of elders was entrusted to pass this teaching on to future generations. He writes,

Peter did not even attempt to give a full accounting of the apostolic preaching. That was not the purpose for his written works. He expected a brief reminder to be sufficient to refresh the memories of his hearers. The much larger body of apostolic oral preaching was left by the Apostles in the custody of those faithful chosen men – the elders of the various congregations – to be guarded and faithfully transmitted orally. Thus, it is apparent that Peter trusted these faithful men completely as conduits for the inspired teachings. (80-81)

³¹ Tim makes it a major point in several places in the book that the ECFs erred in their calculations because they used the Septuagint rather than the Hebrew text.

According to Tim, even though the Early Church Fathers were not inspired, they nevertheless were the “*conduits*” for a large body of inspired, apostolic teaching that was not recorded in Scripture, at least some of which is “*necessary*” for us to have an abundant entrance into the Kingdom. The Millennial Week doctrine is one such inspired teaching.

This brings us to what I consider to be the heart of the matter. It is unacceptable for an expositor to assert that, (i) his doctrine is “biblical” or “scriptural” or “apostolic” even though it is never explicitly taught in the Bible, and that, (ii) contrary evidence that really is in the Bible can be safely ignored because it is mistaken. This contradicts the most important principle of Biblical Exegesis – the Absolute Authority of the Scriptures. The result of this approach to theology is to seal up the truth and “*the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints*” from everyone except for a few specialists in the subject of church tradition. This is dangerous ground.

§B3: The alleged “change in tone” did not occur and is based on a misinterpretation.

One of the key components of Tim’s assertions is that the expectation found in the epistles that the Lord could return within the lifetimes of the first century Christians was mistaken. He maintains that this expectation is found only in the early epistles. It is, in fact, found in 1 Timothy³² and Titus,³³ both written around A.D. 62-64. And it is found in 1 Peter³⁴ written around A.D. 64-65. Tim writes that the language in 2 Timothy, written approximately A.D. 66-67, proves that by the time Paul wrote this epistle he had received the revelation of the Millennial Week and consequently he knew that there would be a considerable delay in the Lord’s Second Coming.³⁵ Tim’s assertion is based on a misinterpretation of 2 Timothy 4 and his overlooking of the same expectation in later epistles. He writes,

Some of the New Testament’s earlier books seem to indicate an expectancy of Christ’s return in the lifetimes of the first century Christians. For example, Paul’s statement that “*we who are alive and remain*” at the coming of the Lord could imply that he expected to see Christ’s return. (179)

In the earlier epistles, Paul tended to write as though he expected Jesus’ return to be very soon, although he never stated that it would. Yet, in his later Epistles, he wrote as though it was quite some distance away. This is apparent in his instructions to Timothy, describing the conditions in the future. “*For the time will*

³² In 1 Timothy 6:13-16 Paul writes with the expectation that Timothy could live until the appearing of Christ.

³³ Titus 2:11-14

³⁴ 1 Peter 4:7

³⁵ This leaves an extremely narrow window of time, around A.D. 65-66, during which the Apostles must have received the new revelation.

come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.” [2 Timothy 4:3-4] This was new revelation given to Paul towards the end of his ministry. The Spirit indicated to Paul that a considerable period of time would elapse before Jesus’ return, and that a massive state of apostasy would occur among the Christian churches in those days. Peter implied the same thing in his last epistle, written at about the same time (the mid-sixties): “...*knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming?’*” (2 Peter 3:3-4) This is when Peter also reminded them that God’s “days” are measured in millennia, implying his knowledge of the Millennial Week. (180-181)

If Tim is correct (based on 2 Timothy 4:3-4 and 2 Peter 3:3-4) that the new doctrine of the Millennial Week had been revealed to the apostles by the time these two epistles were written, then none of the epistles written subsequently should contain the expectancy expressed in the “earlier epistles.” These include at a minimum Hebrews; Jude; John; 1, 2, and 3 John; and Revelation.

Tim’s interpretation of these passages is mistaken and it is easy to demonstrate that the alleged “change in tone” did not take place. I will deal with the interpretation 2 Timothy 4:3-4 first and then address the alleged change in tone. The interpretation of 2 Peter will be dealt with in §B7 and §B8.

Interpretation of 2 Timothy 4:3-4

When Paul writes, “*the time will come,*” was he referring to a time in the far distant future – nearly 2,000 years in the future – as Tim claims? There are two possibilities. Paul could have been referring (as Tim asserts) to a situation that would develop after “*a considerable period of time.*” Or Paul could have been referring to a situation that had in fact already commenced when he wrote this epistle. I believe this second possibility is the correct interpretation.

Timothy was an elder of the church in Ephesus. This warning in 2 Timothy 4 echoes the warning Paul delivered to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20. In Acts we read,

²⁸ *Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*

²⁹ *For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.*

³⁰ *Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.* Acts 20

This is in substance the same warning that we read in 2 Timothy 4, but these words were spoken approximately ten years previously. Therefore, if the warning in 2 Timothy 4 proves that Paul was aware (because he knew about the Millennial Week) that “*a considerable period of time would elapse before Jesus’ return*” then logically he must have also been aware of it ten years earlier when he warned the Ephesian elders. If we are going to be logically consistent, this pushes the date for the revelation of the Millennial Week back at least ten years earlier. In that case, it would have been revealed before almost all of the New Testament books were written. This makes the “earlier expectation” all the more inexplicable and it leaves us wondering with greater curiosity how this failed to be recorded in any of the epistles.

The second possibility is that Paul was describing a situation that had already commenced. So is there any indication in the context that Paul meant this second possibility? Indeed there is. First of all, this is indicated in the context of Acts 20 where the “wolves” Paul is warning about were men “*from among yourselves.*” This cannot be a reference to the far distant future if the wolves were already alive and standing right there in their midst.

What about the context of 2 Timothy? There we find the same indications. Paul not only indicates that the “wolves” are already present, but he even names them. Paul writes,

¹⁵ *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

¹⁶ *But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.*

¹⁷ *And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort,*

¹⁸ *who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some. 2 Timothy 2*

This is only one of several passages³⁶ in Paul’s Pastoral Epistles (1 & 2 Timothy and Titus) and elsewhere which warn of doctrinal error and apostasy in “*the last days.*”³⁷ The context and the language in every one of these warnings proves that this doctrinal error had already manifested itself and was raging at the time these epistles were written. People were already being led astray. They were already giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons. Whole households were already being deceived and subverted. The faith of many had already been overthrown.

Paul’s exhortations called for an immediate response to this doctrinal error. Hence, these passages do not prove that Paul had changed his expectation or that he had received new revelation that the Second Coming would be in the far distant future. He

³⁶ See 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 4:1-3; 5:20-21; 2 Timothy 2:14-18; 3:1-9; Titus 1:10-16.

³⁷ I have already shown that “*the Last Days*” refers to the entire age from the First to the Second Coming of Christ.

was warning of a condition that had already commenced. Furthermore, this state of **doctrinal error and apostasy has characterized every period of church history** from the time Paul wrote until the present day.

The Alleged “Change In Tone”

If Tim is correct, then the expectation that the Lord could return during the lifetime of the readers should not be found in 2 Peter, Hebrews, or any of the epistles of John or Revelation. But contrary to Tim’s suggestion, this expectation continues to be a major theme until the very end of the New Testament Scriptures.

Second Peter is one of the three epistles Tim claims support the Millennial Week. Chapter 3 of the epistle, is about the Second Coming of Christ. With reference to this Day, Peter writes,

¹¹ Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God... 2 Peter 3

This passage proves that even though Peter knew that he personally would not live to see the coming of Christ,³⁸ he did not know whether any of his readers would. He reminds them to be “*looking for*” His coming. The word “*looking for*” is the same word in the *Olivet Discourse* where Jesus taught the parable of the Unwise Servant.

*“...the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not **looking for** him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. Luke 12:46*

Tim has previously argued³⁹ that “*looking for him*” in this passage means discovering the day and hour of His coming through the kind of chronological research in *Time of the End*. Yet Peter is commanding his readers to “*look for*” His coming apart from any such research.

The next expression, “*and hastening the coming of the Day of God,*” is even more problematic for the Millennial Week. The Millennial Week regards the coming of Christ as a fixed day which cannot be altered, exactly 6,000 years from creation. But Peter’s words here require just the opposite. He states not only that the day can be altered, but that his readers can “*hasten*” the coming of that day. This cannot be reconciled with the Millennial Week. And it cannot be regarded as a mistaken, early expectation since it occurs in the very epistle that Tim claims supports the Millennial Week.

³⁸ 2 Peter 1:13-15

³⁹ Chapter 1, pp. 32-34

The Book of Hebrews is the second epistle Tim alleges was written after the new revelation of the Millennial Week doctrine. Tim's position regarding the Book of Hebrews is that it was written to prepare the final generation of believers for the Great Tribulation. I do not dispute that interpretation *per se*. However, Hebrews contains language which assumes that the generation that was alive when it was written *could be* that last generation. The expectation is exactly the same as in the "earlier epistles," that is, it is written from the perspective that the Great Tribulation and the Second Coming of Christ were possible within the lifetime of the epistle's readers. This perspective is stated plainly in Hebrews 10.

*²⁴ And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, **and so much the more as you see the Day approaching**.* Hebrews 10

Whether "*the Day*" in Verse 25 is taken to mean the day of Christ's Second Advent or a day of testing and apostasy during the Great Tribulation, the result is the same. The author of Hebrews writes with the expectation that his readers could live to see that day. This decisively refutes Tim's premise of a "change in tone." It also effectively refutes the central premise of the Millennial Week doctrine that the Second Coming was necessarily almost 2,000 years in the future.

The First Epistle of John was written decades after Hebrews. It too maintains the same pattern of expectancy that we find in the "earlier epistles."

¹⁸ Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. 1 John 2:18

This is a remarkable statement. The language is eschatological and it shows that more than two decades after the destruction of the Second Temple the last apostle is still writing with the expectation that the Second Coming of Christ could be within the generation of his readers. This is confirmed in Verse 28.

And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. 1 John 2:28

By far, the strongest language expressing the expectation that the Lord's Coming might be within the lifetime of the readers is found in the Revelation of John, and in particular, in the Letters to the Seven Churches. Thus we read in the Letter to the Church at Pergamos,

¹⁵ Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. ¹⁶ Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. Revelation 2

The “sword of My mouth” is also mentioned in Revelation 1:16; 2:12; 19:15, 21. This is the sword with which He slays the wicked at His Second Coming. Again, we read in the Letter to the Church at Thyatira,

²⁵ But hold fast what you have till I come. ²⁶ And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations. Revelation 2

These words obviously assume that the recipients of the letter could live until the Second Coming. Moreover, these are the **spoken words of Christ Himself** and cannot be regarded as the mistaken expectation of a still-learning apostle. Again, we read in the Letter to the Church at Sardis,

³ Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. Revelation 3

And in the Letter to the Church at Philadelphia,

¹⁰ Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹ Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. Revelation 3

There is more, but that is sufficient to establish beyond any doubt that the alleged “change in tone” did not happen. The expectation that the Lord could return within the lifetime of the readers remained the firm conviction from the beginning to the end of the apostolic age and it is a **major Bible doctrine**.

The Nuts and Bolts – Old Testament

I will now pass from the “bird’s eye view” of Chapter 3 of Tim’s book and move into the nuts and bolts of Tim’s exposition of specific passages from which he endeavors to establish the Millennial Week in Scripture.

No one would ever discover the Millennial Week from the Scriptures alone. One must have the Early Church Fathers to discover this concept. In spite of these limitations, Tim identifies two Old Testament passages and four New Testament passages from three epistles whose combined evidence he insists is strong enough to establish the

Millennial Week as “biblical teaching.”⁴⁰ So while it is not taught directly, clearly, or explicitly in any one of these passages, Tim infers the essential components of this teaching from these passages and then combines the components into an organized whole. In this way, Tim claims that the combined weight of these inferences rises to the level of “explicit teaching.”⁴¹ He writes,

However, when adding his [John’s] account to the information already provided by Peter and Paul, we have all of the components of chiliasm’s millennial week chronology explicitly taught in the New Testament. (99)

So, two Old Testament passages and four New Testament passages comprise the superstructure that Tim characterizes as the “explicit” teaching of the Millennial Week in Scripture. And he believes their combined weight is sufficient to counteract the twin difficulties I outlined at the beginning of this section.

§B4: Tim’s interpretation of Psalm 90:4 violates the grammar and context.

If there is any passage that is indispensable to the Millennial Week, it is Psalm 90:4. The doctrine cannot be maintained without this keystone, but Tim’s interpretation of it violates the grammar and the context. In the NKJV it reads,

*For a thousand years in Your sight
Are like yesterday when it is past,
And like a watch in the night.*

This is the passage which is cited to establish the correlation between 1,000 years and a day. Here is Tim’s commentary on this verse.

This passage draws a correlation between a millennium and “the day” from God’s perspective. David’s intent was that God does not reckon time as do humans. The correlation between a millennium and “the day” could just be hyperbole.

Yet, if we take this verse literally it implies that God indeed acknowledges a millennial “Day.” But there is nothing here to directly suggest that this principle relates to creation, or to a calendar counting down to the coming of Messiah. If there was, surely the Jews would have discovered it.

If Psalm 90:4 is meant literally, that God does indeed reckon time in millennial “Days,” where would David have gotten such an idea? The answer is to be found in Genesis. (74)

⁴⁰ These are (i) 2 Peter 1:12-19; (ii) 2 Peter 3:3-4, 8-10; (iii) Hebrews 3-4; and (iv) Revelation 20. To these, of course, must be added the Genesis creation account and Psalm 90:4.

⁴¹ Before proceeding with the critique, two words need to be defined. The first is “*explicit*.” The word “explicit” is an adjective that means, “*stated clearly and in detail, leaving no room for confusion or doubt.*” The second word is “*infer*.” The word “infer” is a verb that means, “*to deduce or conclude from evidence and reasoning rather than from explicit, direct statements.*” A conclusion that is reached in this manner is an “*inference*.”

Tim says this is the “literal” interpretation of the verse and this was “David’s intent.” To evaluate this conclusion, we should consider the grammar and context. Authorship aside,⁴² there is an obvious problem with claiming this as the literal interpretation of this verse; namely, the last phrase, “**and like a watch in the night.**”

In Hebrew, the verse reads,

כִּי אֶלֶף שָׁנִים בְּעֵינֶיךָ כְּיוֹם אֶתְמוֹל כִּי יַעֲבֹר וְאַשְׁמֹרֶה בַּלַּיְלָה

And in the LXX, the verse reads,

ὅτι χίλια ἔτη ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς σου ὡς ἡ ἡμέρα ἡ ἐχθές ἢ τις διήλθεν καὶ φυλακὴ ἐν νυκτί

The Greek is a very literal, almost word-for-word, translation of the Hebrew. There is no disharmony, discrepancy, nor contradiction between the two versions. Both begin with a word that means “for” or “because.” This is כִּי in Hebrew and ὅτι in Greek. The presence of this word means this verse is an explanation of what came previously.

Both versions say that in God’s eyes, 1,000 years are “like,” or “comparable to,” two specific things. One is “yesterday when it is past.” The second is “a watch in the night.”

This last phrase is equally part of the comparison as the previous. If Moses’ intent was to say that God reckons time in “millennial days,” then what is the meaning of this last phrase? A watch in the night is a four hour period, and there were three watches every night. So if this verse established a correlation between a millennium and a day, then it also establishes a correlation between a millennium and four hours. Obviously, the original intent cannot have been to instruct us in performing chronological research. Nor can it have been a prophecy of 6,000 years.

Like all chiliasts, Tim is ignoring this last phrase. Therefore, calling this interpretation “literal,” is inaccurate and **the correlation between a day and a millennium is destroyed in the very same verse in which it is supposedly established.** Therefore, that **cannot** have been Moses’ intent.

If it was not Moses’ intent to say that God reckons time in millennial days, then what was his intent? To answer that, let us do what we should always do first when interpreting Scripture. Let us look at the verse in its context.

Psalm 90 begins as follows,

A Prayer of Moses the man of God.

¹ *Lord, You have been our dwelling place⁴³ in all generations.*

² *Before the mountains were brought forth,*

⁴² The author of Psalm 90 was Moses, not David.

⁴³ Or “refuge”

*Or ever You had formed the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.*

These first two verses declare the immortality and immutability (unchangeableness) of God. The also declare that He is transcendent (outside of His creation). And yet, in spite of his immortality, immutability, and transcendence, the Psalm tells us that He cares about His creation in the words, “*you have been our refuge in all generations.*” Moses continues.

³ *You turn man to destruction,
And say, “Return [repent], O children of men.”*

God’s immortality is here contrasted with man’s mortality and frailty. Man’s frailty is described as a consequence of sin and in the face of this frailty, mankind is exhorted to repentance. This verse makes the observation that humanity has been turned to “*destruction*” and this destruction is always impending. In view of this, God is continually calling upon men to “*return*” or “*repent.*” Verse 4 follows, but it should be read along with Verses 5 and 6.

⁴ *For a thousand years in Your sight
Are like yesterday when it is past,
And like a watch in the night.
⁵ You carry them away like a flood;
They are like a sleep.
In the morning they are like grass which grows up:
⁶ In the morning it flourishes and grows up;
In the evening it is cut down and withers.*

The idea of this passage is to emphasize the brevity and frailty of human life in contrast with the eternity of God. Moses goes on to state that it is because of the wrath of God against sin that men live such a brief time on earth. He writes,

⁷ *For we have been consumed by Your anger,
And by Your wrath we are terrified.
⁸ You have set our iniquities before You,
Our secret sins in the light of Your countenance.
⁹ For all our days have passed away in Your wrath;
We finish our years like a sigh.
¹⁰ The days of our lives are seventy years;
And if by reason of strength they are eighty years,
Yet their boast is only labor and sorrow;
For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.
¹¹ Who knows the power of Your anger?
For as the fear of You, so is Your wrath.*

Since humanity's time on earth is so brief, Moses cries out for humility and wisdom.

¹² *So teach us to number our days,
That we may gain a heart of wisdom.*

He then praises God for His mercy and compassion.

¹³ *Return, O Lord!
How long?
And have compassion on Your servants.*
¹⁴ *Oh, satisfy us early with Your mercy,
That we may rejoice and be glad all our days!*
¹⁵ *Make us glad according to the days in which You have afflicted us,
The years in which we have seen evil.*
¹⁶ *Let Your work appear to Your servants,
And Your glory to their children.*
¹⁷ *And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us,
And establish the work of our hands for us;
Yes, establish the work of our hands.*

In summary, Psalm 90 is an exhortation to repentance. Men are reminded that God is eternal, but our lives are extremely brief because of God's wrath against sin. The short time we have is a gift and should be used to gain a heart of wisdom. This interpretation of Psalm 90:4 is based on the grammar and context and it can genuinely be called the "literal interpretation." If this interpretation is correct, then it should harmonize with Peter's inspired quotation of this passage in his second epistle.

⁸ *But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.* ⁹ *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.* 2 Peter 3

Peter's words are in perfect harmony with the original context of Psalm 90! God is eternal and our time is short. In view of the impending judgment of God, but also because He is merciful and compassionate, men are exhorted to repentance. There is nothing in either passage to suggest the Millennial Week. Given the prominence of Psalm 90:4 in all presentations of the Millennial Week doctrine, this is a fatal error.

§B5: Genesis 2:16-17 does not contain a secret code or hidden cypher for calculating the time of the end. The interpretation must be grammatical and must harmonize with the Biblical teaching on sin and death.

Tim erroneously believes that he has established from Psalm 90:4 that God reckons time in millennial days, but that is not a literal interpretation of the passage. Tim next

poses the question where David (or rather Moses) could have gotten such an idea. Tim surmises that this idea must have come from Genesis 2:16-17. He writes,

If Psalm 90:4 is meant literally, that God does indeed reckon time in millennial “Days,” where would David have gotten such an idea? The answer is to be found in Genesis.

Gen. 2:16-17

¹⁶ *And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, **for in the DAY that you eat of it you shall surely die.**”*

Adam did not die within a twenty-four hour “day” of eating the forbidden fruit. Some have tried to explain away God’s warning by claiming that only a sentence of death was passed on Adam that day, or that he only began to die that day. Yet, that is not what the text says. The Hebrew literally says, “*in the day you eat of it, dying you shall die.*” The Septuagint renders it, “*in the day you eat of it you shall die by death.*”

Some Christian interpreters, realizing the text demands the full execution (not only the sentence) of death on that very day, appeal to allegorical interpretation, claiming Adam died “spiritually” that day. Such an interpretation denies any connection to physical death in God’s threat. Yet, this clashes with Paul’s commentary on the passage. “*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, **and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men,** because all sinned... Nevertheless **death reigned from Adam to Moses.**”* Paul was referring to physical death (which reigned from Adam to the Law) as the result of Adam’s sin, which was based on God’s judgment predicted in Genesis 2:16-17. Paul understood the threat of ‘death’ to Adam to be physical death.

Notice the result of Adam’s defiance of God’s threat... There can be no doubt that the last statement, “***for dust you are, and to dust you shall return,**”* is precisely the same judgment predicted in God’s prior warning: “*for in the day that you eat of it **you shall surely die.**”*

Paul was therefore correct in understanding this as a threat of physical death. God stated emphatically that Adam would die physically in the same day that he ate the forbidden fruit. (74-75, emphasis in original)

It is not necessary to resort to an allegorical interpretation of the word “*death*” as do some interpreters nor to an allegorical interpretation of the word “*day*” as does Tim. Tim points out that the meaning of the Hebrew expression is “*dying you shall die,*” which is correct. But he says the Greek Septuagint renders it, “*you shall die by death.*” A closer look at the Greek will prove instructive. The Septuagint has,

ἢ δ' ἂν ἡμέρᾳ φάγητε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ θανάτῳ ἀποθανεῖσθε

ἢ δ' ἂν ἡμέρᾳ is an indefinite relative clause meaning “on whatever day.”

φάγητε is the aorist subjunctive of the verb “to eat.” God had just commanded them not to eat. Now He says, “when you do...” This is introducing a conditional clause. It is a third class conditional clause expressing the simple idea of “if (or when)... then as a result.”

θανάτῳ ἀποθανεῖσθε This is the noun “death” in the dative case followed by the verb “to die” in the future middle indicative. The middle voice is defined by Wallace as follows.

Defining the function of the middle voice is not an easy task because it encompasses a large and amorphous group of nuances. But in general, in the middle voice the subject *performs* or *experiences the action* expressed by the verb in such a way *that emphasizes the subject's participation*. (Wallace, p 414)

In other words, the meaning is not simply that they would “die,” but that they would be killing themselves. The noun, “death” is in the dative case. This is a “cognate dative” because the word “death” is a cognate (same root) as the word “to die.” According to Wallace, “the force of the cognate dative will be primarily to emphasize the action of the verb.” In this case, by eating the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve would be killing themselves resulting in death. But whereas the act of eating occurs at a specific point in time as reflected by the aorist tense, the dying is a process that begins with the willful act and continues until the end result (death) is reached.

In summary, God was telling Adam and Eve that on the day that they eat of the forbidden fruit, they will begin a path and process of dying that will continue with an inevitable result – their own death. The length of this process and the time of its consummation are undefined, but the end result is certain.

There is a great deal of corroboration for this interpretation. In the Old Testament, we find the choice of two paths constantly presented. There is the way of life or the way of death. This is found in Deuteronomy 30.

¹⁹ I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; ²⁰ that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days

This idea of a way of life versus a way of death is emphasized in the Wisdom Books. Two passages are representative.⁴⁴

*As righteousness leads to life,
So he who pursues evil pursues it to his own death. Proverbs 11:19*

*The way of life winds upward for the wise,
That he may turn away from hell below. Proverbs 15:24*

In the New Testament, explicit emphasis is placed on the truth that the Law is incapable of giving life and that all of us have chosen the way of death. We also find it frequently said that those outside of Christ are in a state that is called “dead in sin” and that this state can be traced to a specific point in each person’s life. In Romans 7, Paul is discussing his experience prior to his conversion to Christ. He writes,

*⁷ What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “You shall not covet.”⁸ But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead.⁹ I was alive once without the law, **but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.**¹⁰ And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death.¹¹ For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.¹² Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Romans 7*

In this passage, Paul describes two periods of his life prior to Christ. Of the first period he writes, “*I was alive once without the law,*” and of the second, “*but sin... produced in me all manner of evil desire... but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.*” The verb, “*was alive*” is in the imperfect indicative aspect describing a continuous state that existed from the time Paul was born. During this period Paul did not know sin or covetousness. When Paul reached the age of full understanding, his conscience was awakened by the Law. At that time he says, “*...sin revived and I died.*” Both of these are aorist indicative verbs describing a definite point in time when Paul consciously committed sin and thus entered a state of “death” as a direct result of sin. And he adds, “*sin deceived me, and... killed me.*” These expressions come directly from Genesis. Just as in the Garden of Eden, it is the nature of sin to first *deceive* and then to *kill*.

In the language of the apostles, those outside of Christ are **dead**. This is not “spiritual death” as many interpreters have written. This is the same truth that we find in Genesis but stated explicitly. We each experience our personal “fall” and enter this path of sin and dying. It is a process in which we pursue sin to our own death. It is that middle

⁴⁴ See also Proverbs 6:23; 10:17; 14:12;

voice from Genesis 2 in which we bring about our own death. “*Dying you shall die*” as God warned Adam and Eve.

In this same chapter Paul wrote,

For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. Romans 7:5

Paul also wrote,

Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. Romans 7:13

These words describe the process of bringing death on ourselves through sin. Paul elaborates on this teaching in Romans 8.

⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ⁷ Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. ⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. Romans 8

In Verse 6 he writes, “to be carnally minded ***is death***.” And in Verses 7-8 he gives a four-fold reason why the carnal mind is death: because (i) it is enmity against God; (ii) it is not subject to the law of God; (iii) it is unable to be subject to the law of God; and (iv) those so minded are unable to please God. To be in such a state is – according to Paul’s teaching – death and this is in perfect harmony with Genesis 2.

Thus in the teaching of the apostles, those outside of Christ are not merely dying and are not merely on a path that leads to death. The language they summon to describe this condition is that they have “*died*” and are “*dead*” and are in a state of “*death*.” This is our condition apart from Christ. We do not need a new definition of death to comprehend this. But we also have no authority to neuter or soften the apostles’ language because to do so removes the teeth from God’s warning. This also explains how God could say to Adam and Eve that in whatever day they ate from the tree they would die. They did die in the sense that they entered this condition which Paul calls “death” and which inevitably terminates in the grave. There was no secret code or hidden cipher in God’s words to reveal the time of the end. With this in mind I should mention that Tim’s translation of Romans 8:6 in his “Last Generation Version” is different than the NKJV. Tim’s version has,

⁵ For those being in accord with flesh are inclined from the flesh. But those [being] in accord with the Breath [are inclined from] the Breath. ⁶ For the

inclination of the flesh [leads to] death, but the inclination of the Breath [leads to] life and peace. ⁷ This is because the inclination of the flesh is hostility unto God, for it is not in subjection to God's Law, neither is it able [to be]. ⁸ So those in flesh are not able to please God.

I have provided a detailed assessment Tim's translation of this passage in Appendix B.1 at the end of this section. The conclusion of my assessment is that there is no justification based on grammar for supplying "leads to" in Tim's translation of Romans 8:6. It is not an accurate translation. It is the result of his theological bias and stems from his need to find evidence for his millennial day.

Rome is not the only place where Paul taught this concept of sin and death. Paul wrote the following to the Ephesians.

¹ And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. ⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2

This is probably Paul's most detailed description of what it means to be "dead" in trespasses and sins. Paul also taught this truth to the Colossians as we can see from the following.

¹¹ In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹² buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. ¹³ And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, ¹⁴ having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Colossians 2

A detailed, phrase-by-phrase study of these passages is humbling and fruitful.⁴⁵ Here is a summary of what these passages teach us.

⁴⁵ Paul is not the only apostle who taught this. We can also attribute this teaching to John (1 John 3:14), Jude (Jude 1:12), and Jesus (Matthew 8:22; 23:27; Luke 15:24, 32; John 5:24).

- Men are not born in this condition. We enter this condition later as a direct consequence of willful sin.
- Being dead in sins is characterized by a mind that is set on the flesh.
- It is enmity against God.
- It is characteristic of the course of the present world system.
- It is characteristic of those under the influence of Satan.
- It ultimately and inevitably ends in the grave, “*for dust you are and to dust you will return.*”

We can conclude from this that both the Old Testament Scriptural evidence (Psalm 90:4) and the logical argument (Adam’s “death” on the day that he sinned) which Tim uses as the foundation for the Millennial Week are flawed.

The Nuts and Bolts – New Testament

Tim divides the remainder of Chapter 3 into three sections: The *Millennial Week According to Peter*, the *Millennial Week According to Paul*, and the *Millennial Week according to John*. From this presentation, Tim will conclude:

Based on this accumulated Scriptural evidence, and the fact that the disciples of the Apostles unanimously held this view, it is reasonable to conclude that Christ’s reign over the nations will begin six thousand years from the day of Adam’s sin and expulsion from Eden. Chiliasm is not some quirky theory that the early Christians borrowed from the Jews. It is explicitly taught in Scripture. [100]

First, there is no truth to the claim that “*the disciples of the apostles unanimously held this view,*” but that will be thoroughly investigated in Section D. In this section we are only concerned with the scriptural evidence. As we go through the evidence – asking whether it really constitutes explicit teaching – we must continually bear in mind the definition of “explicit”: *stated clearly and in detail, leaving no room for confusion or doubt*. If the evidence is truly “explicit,” then there can be NO assumptions, inferences, suppositions, hypotheses, conjectures, or guesses, all of which are antithetical to the definition of “explicit.” But as we will immediately discover, Tim’s entire scriptural case is built on assumptions, inferences and conjectures. We will also see that Tim’s support for these assumptions comes from a faulty, biased translation.

The Millennial Week According to Peter

§B6: Tim assumes that the Transfiguration occurred on the Sabbath.

All of Tim’s evidence from Peter’s writings are in connection with the Transfiguration. Tim begins this presentation by making the assumption that the Transfiguration

occurred on a Sabbath. He states this assumption repeatedly, each time with greater emphasis. He makes it a major point and then states that since the Transfiguration occurred on the Sabbath, this signifies the Millennial Week. There is no proof for this assumption. Furthermore, there is a very simple solution to the apparent discrepancy.

Matthew and Mark both record that the Transfiguration occurred “*after six days*” and Luke writes, “*about eight days after these sayings.*”⁴⁶ Tim explains the apparent discrepancy by saying that Luke was counting the days from Jesus’ prediction but that Matthew and Mark were counting from the first day of the week. He writes,

Luke was dating the event from the time when Jesus made the prediction. It was literally eight days from the time Jesus made the prediction until they went up to the mountain. Why then do Matthew and Mark say “after six days?” The answer is that Matthew and Mark were counting from the first day of the week – Sunday. Jesus made the statement on a Friday. “After eight days” would be the following Saturday. But Matthew and Mark chose to record the actual day of the week – Saturday – when this vision took place. “After six days” means after the first six days of the week, on the Sabbath Day. Thus both passages are correct. This apparent discrepancy actually shows that the Transfiguration experience occurred on the seventh day of the week, the Sabbath. [84]

All of this is pure conjecture. The text does not say that Jesus made the statement on a Friday. The text does not say what day of the week the Transfiguration occurred on. The text does not say that Matthew and Mark were counting from the first day of the week. The text does not say that Luke was counting from a different point in time than Matthew and Mark. Finally, there is no biblical precedent for regarding the expression “*after six days*” as signifying the Sabbath.

Tim’s assumption is heavily based on the words, “*after six days,*” which he is interpreting to mean the first six days of the week. But this could be a simple time expression. Compare this with the following simple time expressions:

“After two days”

You know that after two days is the Passover... Matthew 26:2

After two days it was the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Mark 14:1

Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee. John 4:43

⁴⁶ This is viewed by critics as a contradiction in the accounts, so it is an issue for biblical apologetics even apart from this discussion. Answers to this challenge from critics from apologetics sources are abundant.

“After three days”

So it was, after three days, that the officers went through the camp... Joshua 3:2

So he said to them, “Come back to me after three days.” And the people departed. 2 Chronicles 10:5

...the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. Mark 8:31

Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple... Luke 2:46

Now when Festus had come to the province, after three days he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem. Acts 25:1

And it came to pass after three days that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together... Acts 28:17

“After five days”

Now after five days Ananias the high priest came down with the elders and a certain orator named Tertullus. Acts 24:1

“After six days”

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves... Matthew 17:1

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves... Mark 9:2

“After eight days”

“...about eight days after these sayings...” Luke 9:28

And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. John 20:26

“After ten days”

Then it happened, after about ten days, that the Lord struck Nabal, and he died. 1 Samuel 25:38

And it happened after ten days that the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah. Jeremiah 42:7

There are also all of the following in Scripture: “after forty days,” “after many days,” “after certain days,” “after those days,” “after some days,” and even “after three-and-a-half days.” These are all simple time expressions.

Are there occasions when “*six days*” DOES refer to the first six days of the week? And if so, how can we tell the difference. Yes, sometimes “*six days*” does refer to the first six days of the week. But when this is the case, we always see it followed by a reference to “*the seventh day*” with the definite article. For example,

Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none.” Exodus 16:26

⁹ *Six days you shall labor and do all your work,* ¹⁰ *but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.* Exodus 20:9-10

For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Exodus 20:11

We do not find this in any of the accounts of the Transfiguration. Matthew, Mark, or Luke could easily have added, “*and on the seventh day, Jesus took Peter, James, and John...*” But not one of them does so. Every opportunity to plainly state that this was a Sabbath day is omitted. Therefore, there is no solid basis upon which to conclude that the Transfiguration took place on the Sabbath; it is only an assumption.

What about the discrepancy between the “*after six days*” of Matthew and Mark and the “*about eight days after*” of Luke? The simplest solution is that Matthew and Mark used exclusive reckoning, not counting the day before in which the sayings of Jesus were recorded nor the day after when the Transfiguration took place, but Luke used inclusive reckoning counting both.

Why does Luke use the word “about” expressing an approximation? This is also not difficult to explain. The Transfiguration occurred during the night. We know this because in Luke’s account of the event, he writes, “*But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him*” (Luke 9:32). Although the text does not say so, it is possible that the first event (Jesus’ prediction) was also stated in the evening. Thus, if Luke were counting from the night of the first event to the night of the second event and using inclusive reckoning (counting both nights), and if there were six full days intervening between them, then it is natural that he would have written “*about eight days after these sayings.*” This allows for some ambiguity in counting between two night-time events. Matthew and Mark simply counted the intervening six days. This is a much simpler solution to the apparent discrepancy.

Interestingly, Edersheim⁴⁷ surmises that Peter’s confession and Christ’s prediction might have been made on the Sabbath, and that the Transfiguration would therefore

⁴⁷ Edersheim, Alfred *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Book III Chapter 37 and Book IV Chapter 1, originally published in 1883

have taken place during the night after the close of the following Sabbath. Edersheim writes,

There are other blanks in the narrative besides that just referred to. We shall try to fill them up, as best we can. Perhaps it was the Sabbath when Peter's great confession was made; and the 'six days' of St. Matthew and St. Mark become the 'about eight days' of St. Luke, when we reckon from that Sabbath to the close of another, and suppose that at even the Saviour ascended the Mount of Transfiguration with the three Apostles: Peter, James, and John... It was evening, and, as we have suggested, the evening after the Sabbath, when the Master and those three of His disciples, who were most closely linked to Him in heart and thought, climbed the path that led up to one of the heights of Hermon. Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*

But Edersheim acknowledges that this is only conjecture and there is no way to know which day of the week it was. In contrast, Tim writes dogmatically,

In the Transfiguration experience, Jesus took Peter, James, and John up into the mountain on the Sabbath day, into the thick cloud. Why would both of these mountaintop experiences occur on a Sabbath day, when the text in both⁴⁸ cases explicitly indicates the concluding of the six previous days of the week? In both cases, man met with God face to face on the Sabbath day and lived. Perfection was completed on the seventh day. The similarity to the six days of creation and Sabbath rest is hard to miss. [86]

Once again, Tim is misusing the word "explicitly." The text indicates no such thing. But he needs this point to be true so that he can point to the "similarity to the six days of creation and Sabbath rest." He repeats this assumption over and over, writing for example,

Peter himself explained how the Apostles understood what occurred on that seventh day... [86]

Mark's Gospel was written from Peter's recollections. Peter obviously thought it necessary to have Mark record that their preview of Jesus' Kingdom took place "after six days," on *the seventh day*. [88]

What is obvious is that neither Mark, nor Matthew, nor did Luke write that it occurred on "*the seventh day*." Is it possible that the Transfiguration occurred on a Sabbath? Of course. There is at least a one-in-seven probability that it did. But if it did, and if this is a critical component to the story, then why doesn't the text say so? If Peter thought it was "necessary" to record that this occurred on the Sabbath, then he would have said so plainly. Tim needs this point to be true for his explanation, but needing something to be

⁴⁸ Tim is comparing the Transfiguration with Moses' experience on Mount Sinai.

true, and insisting repeatedly that it is true, does not make it so. Tim has barely begun his presentation of the New Testament evidence and already his case is being built on assumptions and conjectures. There is no way for this methodology to culminate in “explicit teaching.”

§B7: Tim’s translation of 2 Peter 1:19 contains at least four critical errors.

Believing that he has proved that the Transfiguration occurred on the Sabbath, Tim proceeds to translate 2 Peter 1:16-19 and then to give an exposition of his own translation. The translation and exposition entirely depend on his assumption being correct that the Transfiguration occurred on a Sabbath. Forcing this assumption results in grammatical errors in the translation and causes the exposition to miss the most important point that Peter intended. Here is Tim’s translation of 2 Peter 1:16-19.

¹⁶ For not by following cunningly devised myths did we make known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but having become eyewitnesses of His majesty. ¹⁷ For having received from God the Father honor and glory from the voice which came to Him from the magnificent glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” ¹⁸ And we heard this voice carried from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹ And [so] we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you are rightly heeding as a lamp appearing in a dark place until the Day dawns and the One clothed with light arises.

The relevant grammatical errors are primarily in Verse 19. For comparison, here is Verse 19 in Tim’s translation side-by-side with Young’s Literal Translation (YLT).

TOTE	YLT
<i>And [so] we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you are rightly heeding as a lamp appearing in a dark place until the Day dawns and the One clothed with light arises.</i>	<i>And we have more firm the prophetic word, to which we do well giving heed, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, till day may dawn, and a morning star may arise -- in your hearts;</i>

Grammatical Error 1: βεβαιότερος (bebaioteros)

The translation “confirmed” is incorrect for three reasons. It is the wrong definition, the wrong part of speech, and because it ignores the comparative suffix.

First, the word βέβαιος (bebaios) means “stable, certain, fast, firm, sure.” The word βέβαιος has already been used in this chapter without a suffix in Verse 10, where the NKJV correctly translates it as “sure.”

Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble.

Secondly, it is an adjective, but Tim translates it as a verb, “confirmed.”⁴⁹ Translating it as a verb incorrectly places the emphasis on an event, namely, the vision of the Transfiguration.

Thirdly, the suffixes, -τερος (-teros) and -τατος (-tatos) in Greek function exactly like the suffixes –er and –est in English. They are the “comparative” and “superlative” suffixes, respectively, as in *firm*, *firmer*, *firmest*. In this case, the word has the comparative suffix requiring exactly two things in the context to be compared, one of which is “*more sure*,” or “*more certain*,” than the other. By translating this word as a verb instead of a comparative adjective, the significance of the comparison is lost in Tim’s translation (as it unfortunately is also in the NKJV) but is preserved in the old KJV and the NASB as “*more sure*,” and in YLT as “*more firm*.” In fact, the reader is not even aware that a comparison is being made.

There are actually several English translations that obscure this comparative adjective, which begs the question, “*why*.” I surmise that the reason is that translators and expositors are simply uncomfortable with the comparison Peter is making. In the context, the comparison is between the apostolic account of the Transfiguration (which attests to the coming Kingdom) and the Old Testament Scriptures (“*the prophetic word*,” which also attests to the coming Kingdom). The correct translation of this clause should simply be, “*And we have the more sure prophetic word*” and Peter’s words are to be understood as pointing the readers to the Old Testament Scriptures as being “*more sure*” than his own eyewitness testimony. Vincent explains this.

...we have the word of prophecy as a surer confirmation of God's truth than what we ourselves saw, *i.e.*, Old-Testament testimony is more convincing than even the voice heard at the transfiguration. [This interpretation] seems to accord better with the words which follow.⁵⁰ “To appreciate this we must put ourselves somewhat in the place of those for whom St. Peter wrote. The New Testament, as we have it, was to them non-existent. Therefore we can readily understand how the long line of prophetic scriptures, fulfilled in so many ways in the life of Jesus, would be a mightier form of evidence than the narrative of one single event in Peter’s life” (Lumby). “Peter knew a sounder basis for faith than that of signs and wonders. He had seen our Lord Jesus Christ receive honor and glory from God the Father in the holy mount; he had been dazzled and carried out of himself by visions and voices from heaven; but, nevertheless, even when his

⁴⁹ Tim uses the word “verified,” also a verb, in his LGV.

⁵⁰ This interpretation is confirmed by the words which immediately follow in Verses 20-21. In fact, these verses cannot be reconciled with any other interpretation.

memory and heart are throbbing with recollections of that sublime scene, he says, 'we have something surer still in the prophetic word.' (Samuel Cox).⁵¹

This interpretation is consistent with the grammar and the context but it is uncomfortable for modern interpreters because the concept has been so deeply engrained in our conscience that the Scriptures of the New Testament are at least equal to the Scriptures of the Old Testament. This concept is certainly true, but at the time 2 Peter was written, it was unknown. Peter frequently points his readers to the written, Old Testament Scriptures.⁵² This is, in fact, a major theme in Peter.⁵³ This point is crucial and Tim misses it entirely when he writes,

The apostolic eyewitness testimony to this event was "the prophetic word confirmed." That is, the prophecies of Psalm 2 and Daniel 7 were confirmed to these three disciples through this unique experience. The Apostles' eyewitness testimony to this fact was intended to provide for Christians "*a lamp appearing in a dark place until the Day dawns and the One clothed with light arises.*" [88-89]

That is incorrect. The apostles' account of the Transfiguration is not the lamp that Peter was exhorting his readers to heed. The "*lamp that shines in a dark place*" is the Old Testament Scriptures. Everyone familiar with those Scriptures will recognize this allusion.

*Your word is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path. Psalm 119:108*

*The entrance of Your words gives light;
It gives understanding to the simple. Psalm 119:130*

In Tim's translation, all of the emphasis is on the vision the apostles witnessed on the Mount of Transfiguration – which is, of course, where he wants it. The emphasis should be on *the Prophetic Word*, the written Old Testament Scriptures, which are even *more sure* than the vision Peter, James, and John shared on the Mount of Transfiguration. It is NOT this vision that Peter is exhorting his readers to "*take heed to,*" but rather the Scriptures which is made clear in the two verses that immediately follow.

Grammatical Error 2: ἡμέρα (hemera)

The translation "*the Day*" is misleading. Observe that Tim includes the definite article "*the*" and capitalizes "*Day*." Tim's treatment of "*the Day*" in this passage flows out of his previous assumption that the Transfiguration occurred on the Sabbath and that this is

⁵¹ Vincent's Word Studies

⁵² See 1 Peter 1:10-11; 1:23-25; 2:2; 2:6; 2:8; 2 Peter 1:19-21; 3:1-2, 16.

⁵³ The position taken by most modern interpreters that the New Testament Scriptures have superseded or replaced the Old Testament Scriptures would have been considered blasphemy and anathema by the apostles.

meant to be symbolic of the Seventh Day of the Millennial Week. The primary weakness of this line of reasoning is the absence of any proof that the Transfiguration occurred on the Sabbath. As for this passage, an additional weakness is that the word “day” does not have the definite article in Greek,⁵⁴ in spite of the way Tim has translated it and commented on it. He writes,

When Peter wrote, “*until that Day dawns, and the One clothed in light arises,*” he was referring to the coming of Christ’s Kingdom (the dawning of the “Day”)... (87)

Peter then referred to the future arrival of the Kingdom as the dawning of “*that Day*.” Like Genesis 2, Peter established a precedent, using the word “*Day*” in reference to the Kingdom, which Revelation identifies as a millennium... the dawning of “the Day” is the arrival of Christ’s Millennial reign over the nations. Thus, “the Day” in this passage also refers to a thousand years. [88-89]

This problem is not as serious as most of the others. I *DO* agree with Tim that the “*dawning of day*” is the arrival of the kingdom; that is not the problem. The issue is simply that by interpreting *ἡμέρα* as a definite noun⁵⁵ and then forcing the Millennial Week into the passage, we miss the point Peter was making. It is best to understand *ἡμέρα* as qualitative and to translate it as “*day*” in contrast to “*night*,” (as in YLT) which fits the context.

A qualitative noun places the stress on quality, nature, or essence.⁵⁶ In the context, Peter’s readers are being exhorted to give heed to the prophetic Scriptures “*as a light that shines in a dark place*.” The word “*light*” is *λύχνος* (*luchnos*) which means a “lamp” or “candle.” This lamp is currently shining in a dark place. This is a familiar metaphor for the Scriptures in the Old Testament.⁵⁷

A lamp or a candle can illuminate our path through this present darkness, but it cannot dispel the darkness. When daylight breaks through the darkness, the night is completely dispelled. That is the imagery that Peter is invoking. The exhortation is to earnestly give

⁵⁴ There is no definite article with day in the Greek of 2 Peter 1:19. The Greek reads, ἕως οὗ ἡμέρα διαυγάσῃ (“*until day breaks through*”). It is possible that Tim is mistaking the relative pronoun οὗ for a definite article. But this is impossible because οὗ is a neuter relative pronoun in the genitive case and ἡμέρα (day) is a feminine noun in the nominative case.

⁵⁵ It is possible for a noun to be definite without the definite article in a limited number of cases. Wallace gives ten constructions in which a noun without the definite article *might* still be definite. (i) It is a proper name (such as Paul). (ii) It is the object of a preposition (“...in the beginning”). (iii) It is modified by an ordinal number (“...in the fourth watch...”). (iv) It is a predicate nominative that precedes the verb (“You are the king of Israel”). (v) It is the object in an object-complement construction (“Jesus is [the] Lord”). (vi) It is a monadic noun, i.e. a noun that is one of a kind (sun, earth, Satan). (vii) It is an abstract noun (love, joy, peace, faith). (viii) It is in the genitive case (“Spirit of [the] God”). (ix) It is used with a pronominal adjective such as “all” or “every.” (x) It is a generic noun (“...where is the wise man... where is the scribe”). Wallace, pp 243-254. None of these constructions applies to “day” in 2 Peter 1:19.

⁵⁶ Wallace, pp 243-244

⁵⁷ “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Psalm 119:105

heed to the Scriptures during the night time in which we live until day dawns with the Advent of Christ, and the darkness is dispelled.

How does this differ from Tim's explanation? The difference is that the emphasis is being place on the qualitative difference between darkness and light. The emphasis is neither on the timing nor on the duration of the day as the next point will make clear.

Grammatical Error 3: ἕως οὗ ἡμέρα διαυγάσῃ καὶ φωσφόρος ἀνατείλῃ (heos hou hemera diaugase kai phosphoros anatele)

The clause, “*until day may dawn and a morning star may arise*” is an indefinite temporal clause⁵⁸ with the subjunctive mood.⁵⁹ The significance of this construction is uncertainty, but this uncertainty is not preserved in Tim's translation.

According to Wallace, the uncertainty in this construction is not about whether or not the verbs in the subjunctive mood (*may dawn... may arise*) will occur, but rather about the timing of the verbs. Wallace explains it as follows,

The Subjunctive in Indefinite Temporal Clause

The subjunctive is frequently used after a *temporal adverb* (or *improper preposition*) meaning *until* (e.g. ἕως, ἄχρι, μέχρι), or after the temporal conjunction ὅταν with the meaning, *whenever*. It indicates a future contingency from the perspective of the time of the main verb.⁶⁰

This means that Peter's choice of words expresses his uncertainty about the timing of the return of Christ. This is in perfect harmony with every other statement in the New Testament about the return of Christ. But this contradicts Tim's assertion that the apostles knew of the Millennial Week and it especially contradicts Tim's assertion that Peter and Paul had actually calculated the time of the end.

Grammatical Error 4: φωσφόρος (phosporos)

The translation “*the One clothed in light*” is an interpretation not a translation. Tim makes it a personal reference to Christ in the Transfiguration. But in fact, the word is the well-known name φωσφόρος (phosporos) of the “morning star” which we know to be the planet Venus. This “morning star” is frequently seen at dawn, which is exactly the way Peter uses it in this passage.

⁵⁸ An indefinite temporal clause occurs when we have a temporal conjunction (ἕως) followed by the genitive of the neuter relative pronoun (οὗ), and a verb or verbs in the subjunctive mood (in this case διαυγάσῃ... ἀνατείλῃ).

⁵⁹ The force of the subjunctive mood is uncertainty or contingency.

⁶⁰ Wallace, pp. 479-480. See also Thayers Lexicon entry under ἕως. “With the genitive of the neuter relative pronoun οὗ or οὗτου it gets the force of a conjunction, until, till (the time when).”

§B8: Tim asserts without warrant that Peter gave his readers a millennial countdown in 2 Peter 3.

In 2 Peter 3, Tim asserts that Peter is giving his readers a countdown to the Kingdom in millennial days. As we will see, this is another inference. It is a misuse of Psalm 90:4. And it violates the immediate context. Here is 2 Peter 3 complete in the NKJV.

¹ Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), ² that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, ³ knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, ⁴ and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." ⁵ For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, ⁶ by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. ⁷ But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

⁸ But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Tim begins his commentary on this passage as follows.

In the third chapter Peter went beyond merely referring to Christ's reign over the nations as "the Day." He also applied the same principle outlined Psalm 90:4, that a day is as a thousand years, to the period between Jesus' ascension and His second coming. He gave a countdown to the Messianic "Day" in millennial "Days." ...Thus Peter and his readers not only viewed the future reign of Christ over the nations as a millennial "Day," but they also categorized the time preceding Christ's return in millennial "Days" as well. (89-90)

The second epistle of Peter strongly suggests chiliasm's millennial week. Peter referred to the Apostles' vision of Christ's Kingdom on the Mount of Transfiguration as occurring "after six days," (after the six days of the week, on the Sabbath). He referred to the dawn of "that Day," using the word "Day" in reference to Christ's coming Kingdom. Peter's apostolic preaching and testimony about Christ's second coming was based on this event which confirmed the Old Testament prophecies. And he explained the delay in the coming of Christ's Kingdom in terms of millennial Days, referring his readers to David's Psalm that a day in God's reckoning is a millennium. (90)

This reasoning contains a series of assumptions and exegetical errors which I have already addressed. The reference to Psalm 90:4 as “*outlining a principle that a day is as a thousand years*” is an exegetical error (§B4). The reference to the Transfiguration occurring on the Sabbath is an assumption (§B6). The statement that the Transfiguration “confirmed” the Old Testament prophecies is a grammatical error (§B7). Here, Tim adds to this series of errors the assertion that Peter is giving his readers a “countdown” to the Kingdom in terms of millennial days.

There is no contextual justification for this assertion. In fact, the context is against it. First, Peter does not say that the delay is because of a millennial countdown. He says it is because God is giving men time to repent.⁶¹ Secondly, Peter tells his readers that by their conduct, they can “*hasten the coming of the day of God.*” Thirdly, Peter has already reminded his readers several times of the Olivet Discourse, and at the end of his epistle he again borrows the language of that discourse to exhort his readers as follows,

*¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, **looking forward** to these things, be diligent to **be found** by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; ¹⁵ and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation... 2 Peter 3*

The two expressions “*be found*” and “*looking forward*” are both from the Olivet Discourse in the *Parable of the Wise Servant and the Evil Servant*. The word for “*looking forward*” means “*to expect, to look for, to wait for.*”⁶²

*⁴⁵ “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? ⁴⁶ Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, **will find** so doing. ⁴⁷ Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. ⁴⁸ But if that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ ⁴⁹ and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, ⁵⁰ the master of that servant will come on a day when he is **not looking for him** and at an hour that he is not aware of, ⁵¹ and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Peter is exhorting his readers to imitate the wise servant and to not be like the evil servant. This is consistent with the language and fits the context in which Peter is repeatedly quoting from the Olivet Discourse. This proves decisively that Peter was not giving his readers a millennial countdown in which the return of Christ was still 2,000 years away. It proves that Peter’s expectation was that the Lord could return within the lifetime of his readers. Therefore, it also proves that Peter was not a chiliast.

⁶¹ Which is consistent with the context of Psalm 90.

⁶² It is the present, active participle of the word προσδοκᾶω.

Summary of Peter: Tim's case for the Millennial Week from the epistles of Peter is entirely based on a series of interconnected assumptions, inferences, grammatical errors, and exegetical fallacies. I conclude that there is no evidence that Peter believed or taught the Millennial Week.

The Millennial Week According to Paul (Hebrews) and John (Revelation)

Tim's discussion of Hebrews and Revelation continues and supplements the logical argument he began in his discussion of 2 Peter. There are two key additions to the logical chain. The first is that the Sabbath of the Old Testament was symbolic of the rest in the Kingdom. The second is that the Kingdom will last for 1,000 years.

§B9: Tim's discussion of the Millennial Week according to Paul reduces to a single unnecessary inference in Hebrews 3-4.

In Tim's commentary on Hebrews 3-4 on pages 92-98 he argues that the Sabbath is a symbol of the believer's rest in the Kingdom. All interpreters who believe in a literal earthly kingdom would agree. This is neither a new concept nor a controversial one. The disagreement enters when Tim infers from this that since the Sabbath was the "seventh day," and since the seventh day lasts 1,000 years, then logically it must be preceded by six days or 6,000 years. Tim writes,

If the future hope of believers – the Kingdom of Messiah – is the "seventh Day," the "Sabbath," and God's "Rest" (which in the creation account occurred on the seventh day), six previous "Days" are logically required. Otherwise, the "Rest" for which we wait would not be the "seventh" Day." (98)

Yes, the Sabbath is one of many biblical symbols for the Kingdom. But if ever there were a perfect place and opportunity for one of the apostles to declare unambiguously the doctrine of the Millennial Week, then surely this would be it. This is especially to be expected considering Tim's assertions that (i) the apostles had just received this new revelation mere months ago, and (ii) they were even at this time in the process of calculating – or perhaps had just finished calculating – the date of the second coming. And yet, Paul makes no such statement. It simply is not there, so Tim must infer it, which he did with this quote. He claims that this is "logically required." But is it? He continues,

Granted, Paul did not define this seventh-day Sabbath rest as a millennium here. However, Peter did define the previous "Days," during which we are waiting for Christ's return, as millennia, referring to Psalm 90:4. (98)

This is not true. I believe I have proved that this was never the meaning of Psalm 90:4, nor was this Peter's intent when quoting it. Tim continues,

Therefore, a week of six millennia under the curse, followed by the Sabbath Day millennium, was most definitely part of the later apostolic peaching. The early Christian writers we quoted previously did not make this up. It was the teaching of the Apostles in their last letters, just before the deaths of Peter and Paul. (98-99)

The evidence Tim has presented does not justify this conclusion. There has been no explicit teaching of any of the points in Tim's logical chain. Every opportunity that apostles had to state any of these points clearly is missing. He has assumed or inferred all of them. Furthermore, the inference of 6,000 drawn from the kingdom rest lasting 1,000 years is invalid because the kingdom will not last a mere 1,000 years as will be shown in §B10.

The Millennial Week According to John (Revelation)

§B10: The idea that the Kingdom will last 1,000 years is a misunderstanding of Revelation 20. The Kingdom will never end.

Tim argues that the final, irrefutable link in this logical chain was forged a little over three decades later by the Apostle John when he prophesied that the Kingdom will last 1,000 years. But this is a fundamental misunderstanding of John's prophecy. This misunderstanding leads to a completely different logical conclusion than Tim has stated. In Revelation 20, John wrote,

¹ Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ² He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³ and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. ⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. ⁷ Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to

gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.⁹ They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.¹⁰ The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Tim describes this as John's "contribution to apostolic chiliasm." He writes,

John was the only one of the three Apostles who had seen the great vision on the Mount of Transfiguration to outlive the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. His contribution to apostolic chiliasm comes from the twentieth chapter of Revelation. There he spoke of Christ's and the saints' rule over the nations as being one millennium. Of course, John did not mention this millennium as being preceded by six others. However, when adding his account to the information already provided by Peter and Paul, we have all of the components of chiliasm's millennial week chronology explicitly taught in the New Testament. (99)

At first glance, this argument appears sound. Since the author of Hebrews referred to the "seventh day," the "Sabbath rest for the people of God," as a metaphor for the time of the inheritance and the kingdom, and since John tells us that the kingdom will last 1,000 years, then it is difficult not to make a correlation with the previous six days of the week as being 6,000 years. Therefore we have chiliasm as a logical inference.

But there is a critical flaw in this logic and we are victims of our own poor terminology. We freely use the terms "millennialism," "premillennialism" and "millennial kingdom" with the idea that Christ's Kingdom will last 1,000 years, and Tim explicitly states in the above quotation that the kingdom will last 1,000 years. But these are non-biblical terms expressing a non-biblical concept. Therein lies the flaw in Tim's logic.

The logical flaw is the failure to realize that the *Kingdom*, the *Rest*, the *Inheritance* and *Christ's Reign over the nations* **DO NOT END** after 1,000 years. In fact, they **never end!**

⁶ *For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;*

*And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

⁷ Of the increase of His government and peace

There will be no end,

***Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,
To order it and establish it with judgment and justice
From that time forward, even forever.***

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. Isaiah 9

*¹³ "I was watching in the night visions,
And behold, One like the Son of Man,
Coming with the clouds of heaven!
He came to the Ancient of Days,
And they brought Him near before Him.*

*¹⁴ Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,
That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
Which shall not pass away,
And His kingdom the one
Which shall not be destroyed. Daniel 7*

*³⁰ Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. ³³ **And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.**" Luke 1*

Christ's reign over the nations is an eternal kingdom that will never end. Therefore, to call His Kingdom the "millennium," or the "millennial kingdom" is a misnomer. The commonly held idea that the Kingdom will only last 1,000 years comes from a misunderstanding of John's words in Revelation 20. John was not contradicting the previously established truth that Christ's Kingdom is eternal. So what does this passage actually say?

Revelation 20 does NOT say that the Kingdom only lasts 1,000 years. It says that Satan will be bound for a thousand years in the bottomless pit so that he cannot deceive the nations any longer "*until the thousand years are finished.*" It goes on to say that the resurrected saints will be living and reigning with Christ over the unresurrected, mortal, nations during this same thousand years until Satan is released to deceive the nations one final time. This culminates in the Gog / Magog war, the resurrection of the unjust, and the Great White Throne Judgment.

But this is not the end of the Kingdom. It is not the end of our Sabbath Rest. It is not the end of our Inheritance. The Holy City will not be deserted. Mount Zion will not be leveled. The Temple will not be dismantled. Christ's Throne will not be put into a crate and warehoused. We will not abandon our resurrected bodies. The kingdom continues beyond the Gog / Magog war and the Great White Throne. There is no end! Thus, the final link in Tim's logical chain is based on a misunderstanding of Revelation 20.

Appendix B.1

Tim's Translation of Romans 8:5-8

Tim's translation of the New Testament, including his translation of the Book of Romans can be found here: <http://www.4windsfellowships.net/LGV.html>

In the NKJV, Romans 8:5-8 reads as follows:

⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ⁷ Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. ⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Tim's Last Generation Version translation is as follows:

⁵ For those being in accord with flesh are inclined from the flesh. But those [being] in accord with the Breath [are inclined from] the Breath. ⁶ For the inclination of the flesh [leads to] death, but the inclination of the Breath [leads to] life and peace. ⁷ This is because the inclination of the flesh is hostility unto God, for it is not in subjection to God's Law, neither is it able [to be]. ⁸ So those in flesh are not able to please God.

Observe that in Verse 6 where the NKJV has “is death,” Tim's LGV has “leads to death.” And where the NKJV has “is life and peace,” the LGV has “leads to life and peace.” There is no verb in the Greek and so the verb must be supplied. But how do we know what verb to supply? The distinction between “is” and “leads to” completely changes the meaning. Tim has an obvious theological preference for “leads to.” But which is correct?

The grammatical construction in Greek is called a “predicate nominative.” The nominative is the case that indicates a noun or pronoun is the subject of a sentence. So, if the nominative case indicates a noun is the subject, then what is a predicate nominative? This occurs when there are two nouns that are both in the nominative case and they are joined by an equative verb such as “is.” Wallace's grammar explains it very simply:

The predicate nominative (PN) is *approximately* the same as the subject (S) and is joined to it by an equative verb, whether stated or implied. The usage is very common. The equation of S and PN does not necessarily or even normally imply complete correspondence (e.g., as in the interchangeability of A=B, B=A in a

mathematical formula). Rather, the PN normally describes a larger category (or *state*) to which the S belongs.⁶³

This is precisely the construction that we find in Romans 8:6. The words φρόνημα (mind) and θάνατος (death) are both in the nominative case and MUST be joined by the implied equative verb, “is.” For comparison, there is another predicate nominative in the same passage in Verse 7: “*because the carnal mind is enmity against God*” (NKJV). Both “mind” and “enmity” are in the nominative case and the verb “is” is not in the text and must be supplied. But in this case, Tim’s LGV correctly supplies “is” instead of “leads to.” He has, “*the inclination of the flesh is hostility unto God.*”

By way of additional comparison, in Romans 6 we have the following in the NKJV:

¹⁶ *Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?*

The words “*leading to*” are not in the Greek but are supplied in both instances. Tim’s LGV has,

¹⁶ *Have you not observed that you are slaves to whomever you volunteer yourselves for obedience as slaves? You are slaves of whoever you obey, whether of sin [leading] to death, or of obedience [leading] to justification.*

In this verse, the NKJV and Tim’s LGV both have supplied “*leading to*.” What is the difference between this verse and Romans 8:6? This difference is that this verse is not a predicate nominative. In this construction the second noun is in the accusative case which is the case used for motion towards a goal, object, or result, and the preposition “to” is present explicitly. “*Leads to*” is a perfectly acceptable translation because it is implied by the accusative case.

The bottom line is there is no justification based on grammar for supplying “*leads to*” in Tim’s translation of Romans 8:6. It is not an accurate translation. It is the result of theological bias regarding the doctrine of sin and death.

⁶³ Wallace, Daniel B. *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, Zondervan, 1996, p. 40.

Section B Conclusion

In Section B, I reviewed the scriptural evidence that Tim presented for the doctrine of chiliasm. Tim acknowledged at the outset that the case to be made from the Scriptures would be limited. In one place he called it “apparently flimsy.”⁶⁴ He spent much of Chapter 3 explaining that the reason the apostles did not commit the doctrine to writing in their epistles was because it was new revelation received shortly before the deaths of Peter and Paul. Nevertheless, he does find intimations of the doctrine in what he calls “the later epistles.” That evidence has been weighed and I have found it unconvincing.

Part I Conclusions

Tim reasons that since the doctrine of chiliasm was revealed to the apostles so late, there was insufficient time to commit it to writing. Instead the apostles taught it orally to the next generation entrusting those men to pass it down through their teaching. Since Tim essentially acknowledges that the doctrine was passed down orally and entrusted to the Early Church Fathers, that is where we must expect to find the doctrine fully expounded and defended. If, as Tim asserts, the apostles “*trusted these faithful men completely as conduits for the inspired teachings,*” then WE should be able to trust them completely as well. We turn now to review the historical evidence found in these writings.

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Part II

Historical Evidence

Section C

Setting the Record Straight

Introduction

In Part 1, I reviewed Tim's case for chiliasm from the Scriptures. The case was weak but Tim acknowledged up front that it would be. He explained that since the revelation of the doctrine came so late, most of it was not written down in the New Testament epistles. Instead, the apostles entrusted it to the next generation. Tim wrote,

The much larger body of apostolic oral preaching was left by the Apostles in the custody of those faithful chosen men – the elders of the various congregations – to be guarded and faithfully transmitted orally. Thus, it is apparent that Peter trusted these faithful men completely as conduits for the inspired teachings. (81)

Since Tim assured us that these faithful chosen men were trusted completely by the apostles to be conduits for this inspired teaching, then **their writings must be where we will find the doctrine fully expounded and correctly defended**. Tim's purpose in Chapter 2 of *Time of the End* is to establish that the eschatology of the earliest Christians was chiliasm – or the Millennial Week – and that this was their “unanimous” opinion. In the Introduction, he makes the following promise of what we will find in the early Christian writers.

Yet, the student of early Christian literature will find just the opposite opinion among the earliest Christian writers, those who had close linkage to the Apostles. **They unanimously believed and taught** that the second coming of Jesus Christ to establish His Kingdom on the earth would occur exactly six thousand years from creation. According to this system, knowing what year it is on a continuous calendar that begins with creation is all that is necessary to know the year of Christ's return... The eschatology of the earliest Christians is called “chiliasm” from the Greek word “chilia” which means “a thousand.” The term “chiliasm” is equivalent to our modern term, “millennialism.” However, it does not only refer to the “millennium” of Christ's reign mentioned in Revelation 20. It refers to the division of man's time on earth into a series of six millennia of living under the curse followed by the Millennial Sabbath – Christ's reign in Jerusalem. This view was simpler than modern dispensational premillennialism, holding all of the following truths:

- All of the redeemed, both Jew and Gentile, form a single body of God's people with a single inheritance.
- The inheritance of Christians after the resurrection is not heaven, but the restored Land that God promised to Abraham and to his 'Seed' on the restored earth.
- The 70th week of Daniel is entirely future, a seven-year period of trouble just before Jesus returns...
- The resurrection and gathering of Christians to meet Christ is after the great tribulation.
- The future reign of Christ on earth from Jerusalem over the nations is the seventh millennium, after exactly six millennia from creation have been completed. (17-18)

That is Tim's definition of chiliasm. And again he writes,

All of the earliest writers who had any kind of connection to the Apostles or their associates **specifically endorsed chiliasm**. We have no clear examples of any first or second century writers opposing chiliasm, or offering any theological points which are incompatible with chiliasm. (41)

Tim summarizes the five points he listed in his Introduction into the following four headings which are the outline for Chapter 2. He then reproduces a selection of quotations from the writings of the Early Church Fathers (ECFs) in support of these four points.

- I. The Land Promise Hope of the Abrahamic Covenant,
- II. The Posttribulation Resurrection and Gathering,
- III. The 70th Week of Daniel
- IV. The Millennial Week and Sabbath Rest.

Each of these points is dealt with in turn with quotations from the ECFs. It is, of course, Point IV that is germane to Tim's book and this critique. By use of numerous quotations on pages 61-71, Tim intends to prove that the Millennial Week was the true essence of the earliest Christian eschatology and that it was unanimous. Tim writes that this *"cannot be denied."*

Despite these claims, I have found problems with Tim's handling of the historical evidence. I will enumerate and summarize these problems and then offer my own historical survey of the eschatology of the Ante-Nicene ECFs.

§C1: Tim's presentation does not follow a progressive approach.

Over the years, Tim has been a strong advocate for approaching Biblical teaching "progressively." By this is meant that one begins with the Bible and moves

chronologically through the Scriptures to observe how a particular doctrine was progressively (gradually) revealed and unfolded. Each passage must be dealt with carefully within its biblical and historical context with later revelation building on earlier revelation. Only after the doctrine has been fully developed in this way is it appropriate to move from the Scriptures into extra-biblical Christian writings – the ECFs. I agree with this method and still use it. I learned it from Tim and I am grateful for his teaching and demonstrating this.

Unfortunately, Tim does not follow this progressive approach in *Time of the End*. He first presents the doctrine from the ECFs in Chapter 2 and then moves on to make his scriptural case in Chapter 3 in light of what he has gleaned from the ECFs. This is the opposite of progressive. But he already explained his reason for doing this, so I won't belabor it. The problem I am addressing now is that he does not handle the evidence of the ECFs progressively either.

The evidence of the ECFs ought to be studied progressively, meaning the evidence should be examined chronologically and comprehensively, including all the relevant data. Each relevant passage from the ECFs must be interpreted within its original context, just as we would handle the Scriptures. A progressive and comprehensive approach enables us to discover how the earliest Christians understood doctrines and their related scriptural passages and how their understanding changed over time. It also enables us to identify *when*, *how*, and *by whom* new doctrines entered the church.

Under the heading of the Millennial Week, the first quotations Tim cites are from a seventh century source. Because much relevant data is omitted and because the data that is included does not always take the context into account, the important questions of *when*, *how*, and *by whom* this teaching originated are left unanswered. Did the ECFs get this teaching from the apostles as Tim alleges, or did they develop it themselves, or did they get it from some other source? By using a progressive approach, we *CAN* answer these questions.

§C2: There is a stark contrast between Points I-III and Point IV in how the ECFs explain and defend these doctrines.

In studying the quotations in Tim's book, it can be observed that for the first three components of ECF eschatology (Points I-III) that Tim includes in his survey, the ECFs provide copious support for their faith by means of quotations of both the Old Testament and New Testament Scriptures. Furthermore, the method of interpretation that they use is consistent with what we call Grammatical-Historical (or "literal") interpretation. For example, under the first point (The Land Promise Hope of the Abrahamic Covenant), the first quotation Tim cites is an extensive passage from Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book V, Chapter 32. The quotation covers most of pages 47-48. In this quotation, and in

support of the point he is making, Irenaeus quotes Romans 8:19; Genesis 13:13-17; Acts 7:5; Hebrews 11:13; Genesis 15:13; Luke 3:8; Galatians 3:6ff, 16; Galatians 4:28; and Matthew 5:5. It is obvious from reading the quotation that Irenaeus was basing his faith squarely on the Scriptures, both Old Testament and New Testament, **and that he is interpreting them literally.**

In Tim's quotation of Hippolytus under Point II, Hippolytus writes, "*It is proper that we take the Holy Scriptures themselves in hand, and find out from them what, and of what manner, the coming of Antichrist is...*" (53). Hippolytus then quotes extensively from the prophetic books, especially Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, and from the New Testament epistles. The method of interpretation he uses is again **grammatical-historical**. This fact can be seen consistently in the quotations for Points I, II, and III.

But Point IV (the Millennial Week) is strikingly different. On that point, the ECFs who held to chiliasm offer extensive "scriptural" support, quoting from almost every book in the Bible, but the **method of interpretation** that they use is drastically different. For this point they switch to **absurd, allegorical interpretation**. This is not apparent from simply reading through the quotations Tim provides because he omits this material, but it becomes obvious when these quotations are read in their original contexts.

§C3: Tim conflates the four points.

In §C2, I noted that there is a striking contrast between the way the ECFs supported Points I – III and Point IV. Tim ignores this contrast and blends all four points together under the single rubric, "*chiliasm*." That is misleading because it is possible to believe the first three points without accepting the fourth. It is only belief in Tim's fourth point (the Millennial Week) that makes one a **chiliast**.

Belief in the first three points implies belief in the land promise and hope of the eternal inheritance, a literal seven-year tribulation, and the post-tribulational resurrection and gathering of all the saints at the second advent of the Messiah. None of this depends on the Millennial Week.

Now if, instead of Tim's fourth point (the Millennial Week), we add to these three points that at His second advent, Christ will take up His throne in His *eternal kingdom that will never end*,⁶⁵ then we have four points which comprise a **complete** and **consistent** system of eschatology. They are all derived from the same, consistent, literal interpretation of **explicit** passages of Scripture in both the Old and New Testaments.

⁶⁵ The eternal kingdom will **commence** with the rewards and losses at the Judgment Seat of Christ, the distribution of the eternal inheritance, the binding of Satan for 1,000 years followed by the Gog / Magog war, and the final resurrection and judgment of the unjust.

This eschatology does not require Tim's fourth point - chiliasm – to be added to it to make it complete and consistent. In fact, **superimposing chiliasm on this system makes it inconsistent** because the kingdom cannot be both eternal and also have a finite duration of 1,000 years.⁶⁶

§C4: Tim has modified the original version of chiliasm found in the ECFs. The original version is more consistent than Tim's modification.

Most of the scriptural evidence Tim presented in Chapter 3 of his book consisted of a logical chain of statements that Tim ultimately used to conclude that, "*a week of six millennia under the curse, followed by the Sabbath Day millennium*" is "logically required." Tim also stated in his Introduction that, "*the ancient Millennial Week eschatology will be taken to its logical conclusion*." (21) But Tim does not take the Millennial Week eschatology to its logical conclusion, nor does he ever identify what the true logical outcome is.

If the first six days of the week represent six thousand years, and the seventh day represents the kingdom, then the logical conclusion demanded by chiliasm is that the kingdom will have a finite duration of 1,000 years. And if that is the case, then the kingdom must end and something else must come after the kingdom. There must be an eighth day. There must be an eight thousandth year. What comes after?

Tim actually *uses* this logic when presenting his case for the Millennial Week in Scripture. But later, he contradicts it. I pointed out in §B10 that the mistaken idea that the kingdom will end after 1,000 years is based on a misunderstanding of Revelation 20 and that we perpetuate this mistake every time we use the unbiblical expressions, "millennial kingdom" and "premillennialism." I also quoted Tim's reference to this passage which I repeat here. Notice his use of the logical conclusion demanded by chiliasm.

John was the only one of the three Apostles who had seen the great vision on the Mount of Transfiguration to outlive the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. His contribution to apostolic chiliasm comes from the twentieth chapter of Revelation. **There he spoke of Christ's and the saints' rule over the nations as being one millennium.** (99)

⁶⁶ Sometimes the term "Historic Premillennialism" is employed. In contrast to Dispensational Premillennialism, Historic Premillennialism is the eschatological view that the second coming will occur prior to a thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints on the earth but subsequent to the great apostasy and the tribulation. Thus, it is premillennial and post-tribulational. But the embedded, unbiblical term "*millennial*" still implies a finite duration of the kingdom. This view has historically been held by most Baptists (until more recently) and Presbyterians. Some of its more recent proponents have included John Gill, Charles Spurgeon, Benjamin Wills Newton, George Eldon Ladd, John Piper, Francis Schaeffer, D.A. Carson, Gordon Clark, James Montgomery Boice, and Carl F. Henry.

This is not the only place where Tim describes the kingdom as lasting only 1,000 years. He repeats this mistake throughout the book.

The term “chiliasm” is equivalent to our modern term, “millennialism.” However, it does not only refer to the “millennium” of Christ’s reign mentioned in Revelation 20. It refers to the division of man’s time on earth into a series of six millennia of living under the curse followed by the Millennial Sabbath – Christ’s reign in Jerusalem. (17)

The future reign of Christ on earth from Jerusalem over the nations is the seventh millennium, after exactly six millennia from creation have been completed. (18)

The seventh millennium, the Sabbath Rest, was the one thousand year reign of Christ over the nations from Jerusalem. In fact, the term “chiliasm” (meaning “millennialism”) referred to these seven millennia, not just the “millennium” of Christ’s reign over the nations. (62)

Peter then referred to the future arrival of the Kingdom as the dawning of “that Day.” Like Genesis 2, Peter established a precedent, using the word “Day” in reference to the Kingdom, which Revelation identifies as a millennium.” (88)

The dawning of “*the Day*” is the arrival of Christ’s millennial reign over the nations. Thus, “the Day” in this passage also refers to a thousand years. (89)

Thus Peter and his readers not only viewed the future reign of Christ over the nations as a millennial “*Day*,” but they also categorized the time preceding Christ’s return in millennial “*Days*” as well. (90)

They all believed that Christ would reign on the earth after His second coming for a thousand years. (109)

Thus, Tim repeatedly and unambiguously declares that the kingdom will last 1,000 years. But elsewhere, Tim contradicts these statements making it clear that he actually believes that the kingdom will have no end. For example,

The earliest chiliasts interpreted the prophecies of Messiah’s Kingdom on earth literally. The prophets were plain that this Kingdom would have no end. (118)

How can these statements be reconciled? In fact, they cannot. They sit side-by-side in tension and in contradiction. The kingdom cannot be both temporal and eternal.

Inasmuch as Tim certainly believes that the kingdom will be eternal, he is not following chiliasm to its logical conclusion and he is inconsistent with his own statements. ***In contrast, the original, early Christian chiliasts DID take it to this logical conclusion.*** They did NOT believe that the kingdom would be eternal and they had

much to say about the end of the kingdom and the eternal state beginning on the “eighth day.”

In spite of his own contradictions, Tim acknowledges that there is a problem. But he does not seem to appreciate its full implications. He describes the problem as a gradual corruption of chiliasm rather than a defect of chiliasm itself. He writes,

Justin and Irenaeus agreed that the Kingdom would continue on earth after the end of the Millennium, and the final judgment... However, some chiliasts continued making concessions to the allegorizing tendencies of the Gnostics and their heavenly destiny expectations. These chiliasts abandoned the idea that Christ's Kingdom on earth was eternal. Instead, they saw the Kingdom as a temporary state lasting only a thousand years. This would be followed by the destruction of the earth and an eternity in heaven. This became Tertullian's view towards the end of the second century. (119)

This is not true. As we will see, *ALL* of the chiliasts without exception, beginning with the first one,⁶⁷ and including Irenaeus, believed that the kingdom would end after 1,000 years and give way to an eternal state and a heavenly destiny.

It should be noted here that every variation of modern premillennialism suffers from this ancient error. In his defense of “Historic Premillennialism,” George Eldon Ladd defines premillennialism as, “*the doctrine stating that after the Second Coming of Christ, he will reign for a thousand years over the earth before the final consummation of God's redemptive purpose in the new heavens and the new earth of the Age to Come.*”⁶⁸ All forms of premillennialism (Historic Premillennialism, Dispensational Premillennialism, Progressive Dispensationalism) fit this definition⁶⁹ and make this same fundamental error. Moreover, because they disconnect the kingdom from “the eternal state,” they must conclude that the Bible tells us next to nothing about it. So when it comes to describing this supposed eternal state, they are all at a loss and flounder. For example, Paul Tan writes,

There is a paucity of Scriptural revelation regarding the Eternal State. The Bible does reveal that after the millennial reign of Christ and the Great White Throne judgment, there will appear “a new heaven and a new earth” (Rev. 21:1), with the New Jerusalem as its probable crown and capital. Of the new heaven and earth's

⁶⁷ I will identify the original Christian Chiliast in my historical survey in Section D.

⁶⁸ Ladd, George Eldon, *The Meaning of the Millennium, Four Views*, edited by Robert G. Clouse, Intervarsity Press, 1977, pp. 17.

⁶⁹ The distinction between Historic and Dispensational Premillennialism is that Dispensational Premillennialism teaches a pre-trib rapture and the eternal distinction between Israel and the Church. Historic Premillennialism is post-trib and teaches only one people of God encompassing both Jews and Gentiles in Christ. Progressive Dispensationalism is an intermediate position.

configuration, size, and appearance, we know nothing. Doubtless, these will be regions of eternal bloom and beauty.

Saints in eternity will enjoy a totally new kind of existence – “no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away” (Rev. 21:4). The service of God out of pure love and pleasure (Rev. 22:3-4) and the enjoyment of God and His new creation will be the eternal occupation of the redeemed.⁷⁰

Similarly, Tatford writes,

II Peter 3 reveals that heaven and earth are to be purged with fire and that God will then bring into existence, “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (II Peter 3:10-13). Ages and dispensations will no longer have any part in Divine dealings, but all will give place to the eternal state in which everything is confirmed and consolidated. The abolition of the sea from the world (Revelation 21:1) will give an enormously larger scope for the earth-dwellers, who will presumably be the people converted during the millennium. The holy city, New Jerusalem, will descend from heaven as a bride adorned for her husband, and God will dwell with men, removing sorrow, sin and sickness. Everything on earth and in heaven will be perfect and holy, and God will be all and in all.⁷¹

On this theme, dispensationalist Paul Enns writes,

Believers’ eternal dwelling place will be the new heaven and the new earth (Isa. 65:17). John describes the new heaven and new earth in great detail (Rev. 21:1-22:5). Many would place the new heaven and the new earth as following the renovation of the heavens and the new earth, after Satan and man rebel against God (2 Pet. 3:10). This does not suggest the annihilation of the original heavens and earth, but a transition in which the heavens and earth are sanctified.

Hebrews 12:22-24 describes the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem: angels, New Testament believers (identified as “church of the first-born”), God, Old Testament believers (identified as “spirits of righteous men made perfect”), and Jesus. The New Jerusalem is pictured as a holy city, coming down out of heaven; many understand that the New Jerusalem will hover over the earth. It is a literal city because it has measurements (Rev 21:16).⁷²

Where did these modern theologians get the notions that the kingdom will end, that there will be a new mode of existence in the “eternal state,” that there will be “earth-dwellers,” and that there will be New Jerusalem city-dwellers, and heaven-dwellers in

⁷⁰ Tan, Paul Lee *The Interpretation of Prophecy*, Assurance Publishers, 1974, pp. 357

⁷¹ Tatford, Frederick A., *God’s Program of the Ages*, Kregal Publications, 1967, pp. 151-152

⁷² Enns, Paul, *Moody Handbook of Theology*, Moody Press, 1989, pp. 379

this eternal state? This struggle to define and describe the “eternal state” after the end of the kingdom did not begin with the Alexandrian school or with amillennialism. **It literally began with chiliasm. *This is the true legacy and result of chiliasm.***

Tim does not include the end of the kingdom followed by a different mode of existence in the eternal state in his definition or teaching of chiliasm. Consequently, Tim’s definition of chiliasm is a modification of the original, early Christian chiliasm. And as a further consequence, Tim’s chiliasm is incomplete and inconsistent. This is the only way to account for his contradictory statements.

§C5: Tim uses invalid inferences and quotes the ECFs out of context.

The need to prove that “*the earliest Christian writers, those who had close linkage to the Apostles... unanimously believed and taught that the second coming of Jesus Christ to establish His Kingdom on the earth would occur exactly six thousand years from creation,*” (17-18) and the need to prove apostolic authority for this teaching, cause Tim to infer more from the evidence than is actually there. He also frequently quotes the ECFs out of context, altering the sense of what they taught. There are several examples of this in the historical survey that follows.

§C6: The ECFs never claimed apostolic authority or tradition for the Millennial Week.

Tim’s primary premise for Chapter 2 of *Time of the End* is that even though the Millennial Week was never explicitly written down in the New Testament, the apostles passed it down orally to the next generation. **But the ECFs never once claimed the one thing Tim reserves for them – apostolic authority via oral tradition.** So, even though Tim claims apostolic authority for this teaching, the ECFs themselves never did.

In fact, in the very places where we would expect them to cite apostolic authority, tradition, or source for the Millennial Week, they never do so. Instead, the reasoning that the early chiliasts did use actually argues against Tim’s premise. The primary methods they used for defending the Millennial Week was allegorical interpretation, numerology, and personal prophecy. All of the chiliasts did this. ***There is not a single reference in which any of the early chiliasts claimed apostolic authority or oral tradition.***

§C7: Tim misuses Anastasius of Sinai.

As already stated, the major thesis of Chapter 2 of *Time of the End* is that chiliasm was universally believed and taught by the first generation of elders. Tim writes,

The week of six millennia plus the Sabbath millennium was held by virtually all of the earliest writers who had any connection whatsoever to the Apostles. (64)

But when we arrange the writings that have survived in chronological order, we find that Tim skips over almost all of the material from the eleven oldest⁷³ authors and the first 90 years of writings. That's an enormous gap considering Tim's assertion that the apostles fully trusted these men to pass down and defend this crucial doctrine which they (the apostles) did not have time to write down.

The only author from this period whom Tim quotes from his own writings is Barnabas who wrote in 130-132 A.D. Because of his importance, I have devoted subsection §D2 to Barnabas in the historical survey that follows. The eleven authors whom Tim skips are I Clement (of Rome, the companion of Paul), Ignatius, Polycarp, Shepherd of Hermas, II Clement (not the same author as I Clement), the Didache, Justin Martyr, Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch, Athenagoras, and Clement of Alexandria. Other than Barnabas, the first author Tim quotes from his own writings is Irenaeus who wrote in ~182-188 A.D.

Since there is no evidence from their own existing writings that any of these authors taught the Millennial Week, Tim instead supplies two quotations (on Page 64 of *Time of the End*) from a 7th - 8th century source, Anastasius of Sinai's⁷⁴ *Hexaemeron*. These two quotations constitute the entirety of Tim's evidence that Clement of Rome, Papias, and Justin Martyr were all chiliasts. I will show that when these quotations are placed in context, they do more harm than help to the case Tim is attempting to make.

Because of his significance, I have devoted subsection §D7 entirely to Anastasius. There is considerably more detail about the *Hexaemeron* to be explored and I will deal with Tim's quotations of him in the proper place following a progressive approach.

Section C Conclusion

Since the Millennial Week is not taught in the Scriptures, and the ECFs did not claim apostolic authority for it, and because there are serious questions about Tim's handling of the historical evidence, there is a need for a new historical survey of early church eschatology using a progressive approach. It is important to determine as precisely as possible *when*, *how*, and *by whom* chiliasm became part of Christian doctrine. We need to set the record straight.

In addition to claiming that chiliasm was the unanimous opinion for the first two centuries, Tim specifically identifies by name the following twelve individual writers (with quotations) as chiliasts: Clement of Rome, Barnabas, Papias, Justin, Irenaeus,

⁷³ This does not include Papias, whose writings are non-extant.

⁷⁴ Anastasius of Sinai was a late 7th - early 8th century Greek ecclesiastical writer, priest, monk, and abbot of Saint Catherine's Monastery at Mount Sinai.

Tertullian, Hippolytus, Commodianus, Cyprian, Methodius, Lactantius, and Victorinus. In order to verify and corroborate Tim's assertions, I have performed my own historical survey of the eschatology of the Ante-Nicene ECFs in chronological order. The results of my survey immediately follow in Section D.

Section D

Historical Survey of Ante-Nicene Eschatology with a Focus on Chiliasm

Introduction

The apostles warned the first generation of disciples about at least three specific sources of danger. The first two of these were from without. The third was from within. A survey of the eschatological developments in the first three centuries will show how prophetically accurate the apostles were.

The first source of danger was Greek philosophy and false knowledge (Gnosis).

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. Colossians 2:8

²⁰ *O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—²¹ by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen. 1 Timothy 6*

The second source of danger was Jewish fables, myths, and man-made traditions.

³ *As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine,⁴ nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.⁵ Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith,⁶ from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk,⁷ desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm. 1 Timothy 1*

¹⁰ *For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,¹¹ whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.¹² One of them, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.”¹³ This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith,¹⁴ not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth. Titus 1*

And the third source of danger was false prophecy.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. Matthew 7:15

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 Peter 2:1

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 1 John 4:1

The effect of Greek philosophy was to corrupt the thinking of the early church away from the earthly, eternal inheritance in fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant. This was manifested in its most extreme form by Gnosticism. But these other dangers – Jewish fables and false prophecies – also had an effect which needs to be explored.

The following survey placing all of the Ante-Nicene ECFs in approximate chronological order⁷⁵ and describing their individual contributions to eschatology is intended to contribute to this need.⁷⁶ The ECFs marked with an **asterisk*** are those twelve specifically named by Tim as teaching chiliasm.⁷⁷

In conducting this survey, I have used the following sources. The first is the 10 Volume *Ante-Nicene Fathers* edited by Philip Schaff. This entire work is available online at the *Christian Classics Ethereal Library*.⁷⁸ The reader is strongly encouraged to access this material and verify my conclusions for himself or herself. The reason the ECFs are in a different order in my survey than they appear in Schaff, is because Schaff's arrangement considers chronology, geography, and to some extent common themes. In my arrangement, I am ignoring these other features and considering only chronology according to the best estimates of scholarship.⁷⁹

My second source is the *Apostolic Fathers* edited by Michael W. Holmes. This source only contains the works of 1 and 2 Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, the Didache, Barnabas,

⁷⁵ Dating the ECFs is complicated requiring analysis of external and internal evidence. Many of the works were written anonymously or falsely attributed. I am relying on the introductions to these works provided by the publishers and editors. The first of these is the *Ante Nicene Fathers* American Edition, originally compiled and edited by Philip Schaff, then edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, and again revised by A. Cleveland Coxe and published by Hendrickson (1885), referred to hereafter simply as "Schaff." The second is *The Apostolic Fathers, Greek Texts and Translations* edited by Michael W. Holmes, published by Baker Books (1999), hereafter referred to as "Holmes."

⁷⁶ A historical survey of specific doctrines is a difficult task to which one could devote a lifetime of study. I have no doubt that I will have overlooked important data and will seek to improve this in the future.

⁷⁷ Clement of Rome, Barnabas, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Commodianus, Cyprian, Victorinus, Methodius, and Lactantius

⁷⁸ <http://www.ccel.org/fathers.html>

⁷⁹ I will, however, indicate the individual writers place if this is known. If the writer is known to have been martyred, this is also stated.

the Shepherd of Hermas, Mathetes, and the Fragments of Papias. Its value consists in extensively updated introductions, additional material and fragments not included in Schaff, and in that it includes the Greek texts.⁸⁰

My third source is the *Hexaemeron* written by Anastasius of Sinai in the 7th-8th century, edited and translated by Clement A. Kuehn and John D. Baggarly, and published by Pontificio Istituto Orientale in 2007. Its primary value is its quotations of earlier church fathers.

My fourth source is the Deuterocanonical books and the Jewish Pseudepigrapha books

In the course of this survey, I have been able to trace chiliasm to its original source and to discover a more complete definition of what the original chiliasts believed. No one could have been more surprised or stunned by these results than I. Although this survey is much longer than I intended, I humbly but urgently commend this to the reader as an essential study for anyone aspiring to become, or claiming to be, a chiliast.

§D1: The late First Century and early Second Century is the period containing the simple, primitive eschatology.

The earliest Christian writers, who had any kind of connection to the Apostles, are obviously those of the first century. This includes Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Papias.⁸¹ In these writings we can discover the simple, primitive eschatology of the earliest disciples.

***Clement of Rome (Rome, 97-98):** The author of *I Clement*⁸² is traditionally believed to be Clement of Rome, the “fellow-worker” of Paul mentioned in the New Testament.⁸³ There are no compelling reasons to doubt this tradition. In any event, it is the oldest Christian writing that has come down to us outside of the New Testament itself. *I Clement* was written in the first century, possibly immediately after the persecution of Nero in the middle of the first century or more likely immediately after the persecution of Domitian around 97-98 A.D., but still within the first century.

A substantial portion of the epistle is devoted to the second coming of Christ, the resurrection, the rewards of the righteous, and the Kingdom of God. He mentions these themes with great simplicity, sincerity, humility, and grace.

⁸⁰ Most of the Greek texts are also available online at <http://www.textexcavation.com/skeptiktexts.html>

⁸¹ Unfortunately, none of Papias’ books have survived. We have only fragments of his writings recorded in works by later writers.

⁸² First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians. There is a Second Epistle to the Corinthians, but scholars are unanimous that it was written by a different author toward the end of the first century or beginning of the second.

⁸³ Philippians 4:3

Ye perceive how in a little time the fruit of a tree comes to maturity. Of a truth, soon and suddenly shall His will be accomplished, as the Scripture also bears witness, saying, "Speedily will He come, and will not tarry;" and, "The Lord shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Holy One, for whom ye look." Let us consider, beloved, how the Lord continually proves to us that there shall be a future resurrection, of which He has rendered the Lord Jesus Christ the first-fruits by raising Him from the dead. *1 Clement*, Chapter 23 -24

The good servant receives the bread of his labour with confidence; the lazy and slothful cannot look his employer in the face. It is requisite, therefore, that we be prompt in the practice of well-doing; for of Him are all things. And thus He forewarns us: "Behold, the Lord [cometh], and His reward is before His face, to render to every man according to his work." He exhorts us, therefore, with our whole heart to attend to this, that we be not lazy or slothful in any good work. Let our boasting and our confidence be in Him. Let us submit ourselves to His will. Let us consider the whole multitude of His angels, how they stand ever ready to minister to His will. For the Scripture saith, "Ten thousand times ten thousand stood around Him, and thousands of thousands ministered unto Him, and cried, Holy, holy, holy, [is] the Lord of Sabaoth; the whole creation is full of His glory." And let us therefore, conscientiously gathering together in harmony, cry to Him earnestly, as with one mouth, that we may be made partakers of His great and glorious promises. For [the Scripture] saith, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which He hath prepared for them that wait for Him." *1 Clement*, Chapter 34

How blessed and wonderful, beloved, are the gifts of God! Life in immortality, splendor in righteousness, truth in perfect confidence, faith in assurance, self-control in holiness! And all these fall under the cognizance of our understandings [now]; what then shall those things be which are prepared for such as wait for Him? The Creator and Father of all worlds,⁸⁴ the Most Holy, alone knows their amount and their beauty. Let us therefore earnestly strive to be found in the number of those that wait for Him, in order that we may share in His promised gifts. *1 Clement*, Chapter 35

Having therefore received their orders, and being fully assured by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and established in the word of God, with full assurance of the Holy Ghost, they [the apostles] went forth proclaiming that the kingdom of God was at hand. *1 Clement*, Chapter 42

The hateful, and those full of all wickedness, were roused to such a pitch of fury, that they inflicted torture on those who served God with a holy and blameless purpose [of heart], not knowing that the Most High is the Defender and Protector of all such as with a pure conscience venerate His all-excellent name; to whom

⁸⁴ "Creator and Father of all worlds" The Greek is ὁ δημιουργὸς καὶ πατὴρ τῶν αἰώνων, "the framer and father of the ages."

be glory for ever and ever. Amen. But they who with confidence endured [these things] are now heirs of glory and honour, and have been exalted and made illustrious by God in their memorial for ever and ever. Amen. *1 Clement*, Chapter 45

All the generations from Adam even unto this day have passed away; but those who, through the grace of God, have been made perfect in love, now possess a place among the godly, and shall be made manifest at the revelation of the kingdom of Christ. For it is written, “Enter into thy secret chambers for a little time, until my wrath and fury pass away; and I will remember a propitious day, and will raise you up out of your graves.” *1 Clement*, Chapter 50

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, and with all everywhere that are the called of God through Him, by whom be to Him glory, honour, power, majesty, and eternal dominion,⁸⁵ from everlasting to everlasting. Amen. *1 Clement*, Chapter 65

What we can learn about Clement’s eschatology from these quotations is that his hope was in the return of Christ and the resurrection of the flesh to immortality. He believed that when Christ returns he will take his “eternal throne” in His Kingdom that will never end. He expected immortal life and the fulfillment of all “his great and glorious promises.” Furthermore, he expected the return of Christ “*soon and suddenly*” and he repeatedly exhorted his readers to constant vigilance, waiting and watching for His return. All of these things are stated explicitly.

What do we *NOT* find in Clement’s epistle? In spite of the fact that Tim identifies Clement as a chiliast, nowhere in the epistle is there any hint of the Millennial Week. This is especially disappointing in light of Tim’s assertion that the apostles did not write down the doctrine, but rather entrusted the teaching of it to the elders of the churches in the first century as the “conduits” for this teaching. **Clement of Rome was specifically one of those elders who knew and heard Paul.** But the evidence from his own epistle suggests that he knew nothing about chiliasm and his exhortations are not consistent with someone who expected the Second Coming to be almost 2,000 years in the future. The significance of this fact cannot be exaggerated.

Ignatius (Antioch, before 100, Martyred 107): Ignatius wrote earlier than Polycarp, during the last half of the first century. He wrote at least seven epistles that have been preserved.

He exhorted his hearers to continual watchfulness, writing in one epistle, “*Be watchful, possessing a sleepless spirit.*”⁸⁶ He did not emphasize eschatology in his epistles, but

⁸⁵ “Eternal dominion” The Greek is *ἐπὶ οὐρανόθεν αἰώνιος* which literally means “*an eternal throne*”

⁸⁶ Ignatius, *Epistle to Polycarp*, Chapter 1

he did emphasize his hope in the resurrection to immortality and the Kingdom of God repeatedly. There is no trace of the Millennial Week in any of these. Here are three quotations.

The last times are come upon us. Let us therefore be of a reverent spirit, and fear the long-suffering of God, lest we despise the riches of His goodness and forbearance. For let us either fear the wrath to come, or let us love the present joy in the life that now is; and let our present and true joy be only this, to be found in Christ Jesus, that we may truly live. Do not at any time desire so much as even to breathe apart from Him. For He is my hope; He is my boast; He is my never-failing riches, on whose account I bear about with me these bonds from Syria to Rome, these spiritual jewels, in which may I be perfected through your prayers, and become a partaker of the sufferings of Christ, and have fellowship with Him in His death, His resurrection from the dead, and His everlasting life. May I attain to this, so that I may be found in the lot of the Christians of Ephesus, who have always had intercourse with the apostles by the power of Jesus Christ, with Paul, and John, and Timothy the most faithful. *Epistle to the Ephesians*, Chapter 11 (Long Version)

For I know that after His resurrection also He was still possessed of flesh, and I believe that He is so now. When, for instance, He came to those who were with Peter, He said to them, "Lay hold, handle Me, and see that I am not an incorporeal spirit." And immediately they touched Him, and believed, being convinced both by His flesh and spirit. For this cause also they despised death, and were found its conquerors. And after his resurrection He did eat and drink with them, as being possessed of flesh, although spiritually He was united to the Father. *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*, Chapter 3 (Short Version)

The times call for thee, as pilots do for the winds, and as one tossed with tempest seeks for the haven, so that both thou [and those under thy care] may attain to God. Be sober as an athlete of God: the prize set before thee is immortality and eternal life, of which thou art also persuaded. *Epistle to Polycarp*, Chapter 2 (Short Version)

Polycarp (Smyrna, before 100, Martyred 155): Polycarp's only known work is one *Epistle to the Philippians*. Polycarp was martyred toward the middle of the second century, but his epistle was likely written decades earlier. The exact date is unknown. However, Polycarp was a very old man by the time of his martyrdom and had known the Apostle John, so he can fairly be considered a first century witness. Polycarp refers to the Second Coming and reign of Christ in His kingdom and to the resurrection, but there is no hint of the Millennial Week.

"Wherefore, girding up your loins," "serve the Lord in fear" and truth, as those who have forsaken the vain, empty talk and error of the multitude, and "believed in Him who raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and gave Him glory,"

and a throne at His right hand. To Him all things in heaven and on earth are subject. Him every spirit serves. He comes as the Judge of the living and the dead. His blood will God require of those who do not believe in Him. But He who raised Him up from the dead will raise up us also, if we do His will, and walk in His commandments, and love what He loved, keeping ourselves from all unrighteousness, covetousness, love of money, evil speaking, false witness; “not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing,” or blow for blow, or cursing for cursing, but being mindful of what the Lord said in His teaching: “Judge not, that ye be not judged; forgive, and it shall be forgiven unto you; be merciful, that ye may obtain mercy; with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again;” and once more, “Blessed are the poor, and those that are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God.” Polycarp, *Epistle to the Philippians*, Chapter 2

If we please him in this present world, we will receive the world to come as well, inasmuch as he promised to raise us from the dead and that if we prove to be citizens worthy of him, “we will also reign with him” – if, that is, we continue to believe. Polycarp, *Epistle to the Philippians*, Chapter 5

The same question I asked about Clement of Rome applies to Polycarp. These men were genuine disciples of the apostles and elders of the churches founded by the apostles. But the evidence from their own writings suggests they knew nothing about chiliasm.

The Shepherd of Hermas (Rome, 85-160?): It is very difficult to date this work as is reflected in the broad uncertainty given. It was held in extremely high regard in the early church, many regarding it as inspired Scripture. Irenaeus quotes it as Scripture. One theory regards it as a reply against Montanism.

The form of the writings consists of a series of five revelatory (apocalyptic) visions, twelve extended commandments, and ten parables (similitudes). Although the form is that of direct revelation, there is little in the way of new doctrine. The emphasis is rather on personal holiness. The symbolic nature of his visions and parables is complicated, but his eschatology is simple. The author strongly believed in the Great Tribulation, which he expected to commence immediately, a fact which is incompatible with chiliasm. He believed in the return of Christ following the Great Tribulation, the resurrection, and the Kingdom of God. He envisions the Kingdom as final. There is no hint of anything following the Kingdom nor is there any hint of the Millennial Week.

Those, therefore, who continue steadfast, and are put through the fire, will be purified by means of it. For as gold casts away its dross, so also will ye cast away all sadness and straitness, and will be made pure so as to fit into the building of the tower. But the white part is the age that is to come, in which the elect of God will dwell, since those elected by God to eternal life will be spotless

and pure. Wherefore cease not speaking these things into the ears of the saints. This then is the type of the great tribulation that is to come. Hermas, *Vision Fourth Concerning the Trial and Tribulation that are to Come Upon Men*, Chapter 3

He showed me again many trees, some budding, and others withered. And he said to me, "Do you see these trees?" "I see, sir," I replied, "some putting forth buds, and others withered." "Those," he said, "which are budding are the righteous who are to live in the world to come; for the coming world is the summer of the righteous, but the winter of sinners. When, therefore, the mercy of the Lord shines forth, then shall they be made manifest who are the servants of God, and all men shall be made manifest. For as in summer the fruits of each individual tree appear, and it is ascertained of what sort they are, so also the fruits of the righteous shall be manifest, and all who have been fruitful in that world shall be made known... For the sinners shall be consumed because they sinned and did not repent, and the heathen shall be burned because they knew not Him who created them. Do you therefore bear fruit, that in that summer your fruit may be known... And in the performance even of a single action a man can serve the Lord; for his mind will not be perverted from the Lord, but he will serve Him, having a pure mind. If, therefore, you do these things, you shall be able to bear fruit for the life to come. And every one who will do these things shall bear fruit." Hermas, *Similitude Fourth*

"First of all, sir," I said, "explain this to me: What is the meaning of the rock and the gate?" "This rock," he answered, "and this gate are the Son of God." "How, sir?" I said; "the rock is old, and the gate is new." "Listen," he said, "and understand, O ignorant man. The Son of God is older than all His creatures, so that He was a fellow-councillor with the Father in His work of creation: for this reason is He old." "And why is the gate new, sir?" I said. "Because," he answered, "He became manifest in the last days of the dispensation: for this reason the gate was made new, that they who are to be saved by it might enter into the kingdom of God. You saw," he said, "that those stones which came in through the gate were used for the building of the tower, and that those which did not come, were again thrown back to their own place?" "I saw, sir," I replied. "In like manner," he continued, "no one shall enter into the kingdom of God unless he receive His holy name..." "The glorious man," he said, "is the Son of God, and those six glorious angels are those who support Him on the right hand and on the left. None of these glorious angels," he continued, "will enter in unto God apart from Him. Whosoever does not receive His name, shall not enter into the kingdom of God." Hermas, *Similitude Ninth*, Chapter 12

Now this age must be cut down in these things, and in the vanities of their riches, and then they will meet in the kingdom of God; for they must of necessity enter into the kingdom of God, because the Lord has blessed this innocent race. Of this race, therefore, no one will perish; for although any of them be tempted by

the most wicked devil, and commit sin, he will quickly return to his Lord. I deem you happy, I, who am the messenger of repentance, whoever of you are innocent as children, because your part is good, and honourable before God. Hermas, Similitude Ninth, Chapter 31

Clement (Author and Place unknown, 120-140): A second book, called *II Clement*,⁸⁷ exists but all scholars agree that the author is not the same as I Clement. Holmes dates this book at around 98-100. Lightfoot dates it around 120-140. It is not a letter but rather an anti-gnostic sermon (homily). It is the oldest preserved sermon of the early church and was widely read in the churches.⁸⁸ The following quotations from this sermon include several references to the return of Christ, the resurrection, and the kingdom that are relevant to this survey.

And consider, brethren, that the sojourning in the flesh in this world is but brief and transient, but the promise of Christ is great and wonderful, even the rest of the kingdom to come, and of life everlasting. By what course of conduct, then, shall we attain these things, but by leading a holy and righteous life, and by deeming these worldly things as not belonging to us, and not fixing our desires upon them? For if we desire to possess them, we fall away from the path of righteousness. 2 Clement 5

And let no one of you say that this very flesh shall not be judged, nor rise again. Consider ye in what [state] ye were saved, in what ye received sight, if not while ye were in this flesh. We must therefore preserve the flesh as the temple of God. For as ye were called in the flesh, ye shall also come [to be judged] in the flesh. As Christ the Lord who saved us, though He was first a Spirit became flesh, and thus called us, so shall we also receive the reward in this flesh. Let us therefore love one another, that we may all attain to the kingdom of God. While we have an opportunity of being healed, let us yield ourselves to God that healeth us, and give to Him a recompense. Of what sort? Repentance out of a sincere heart; for He knows all things beforehand, and is acquainted with what is in our hearts. Let us therefore give Him praise, not with the mouth only, but also with the heart, that He may accept us as sons. For the Lord has said, "Those are my brethren who do the will of my Father." 2 Clement 9

Wherefore, my brethren, let us not be of a double mind, but let us hope and endure, that we also may obtain the reward. For He is faithful who has promised that He will bestow on every one a reward according to his works. If, therefore, we shall do righteousness in the sight of God, we shall enter into His kingdom, and shall receive the promises, which "ear hath not heard, nor eye seen, neither have entered into the heart of man." 2 Clement 11

⁸⁷ This author and this writing are not to be confused with the "Pseudo-Clement" of the third century mentioned just previously.

⁸⁸ I would add that in my opinion, it is a great sermon and how wonderful it would be to hear sermons like this in churches today.

Let us expect, therefore, hour by hour, the kingdom of God in love and righteousness, since we know not the day of the appearing of God. 2 Clement 12

So, then, brethren, having received no small occasion to repent, while we have opportunity, let us turn to God who called us, while yet we have One to receive us. For if we renounce these indulgences and conquer the soul by not fulfilling its wicked desires, we shall be partakers of the mercy of Jesus. Know ye that the day of judgment draweth nigh like a burning oven, and certain of the heavens and all the earth will melt, like lead melting in fire; and then will appear the hidden and manifest deeds of men. 2 Clement 16

For the Lord said, "I come to gather all nations [kindreds] and tongues." This means the day of His appearing, when He will come and redeem us—each one according to his works. And the unbelievers will see His glory and might, and, when they see the empire of the world in Jesus, they will be surprised, saying, "Woe to us, because Thou wast, and we knew not and believed not and obeyed not the elders who show us plainly of our salvation." And "their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be a spectacle unto all flesh." It is of the great day of judgment He speaks... 2 Clement 17

Let us, therefore, work righteousness, that we may be saved to the end. Blessed are they who obey these commandments, even if for a brief space they suffer in this world, and they will gather the imperishable fruit of the resurrection. Let not the godly man, therefore, grieve; if for the present he suffer affliction, blessed is the time that awaits him there; rising up to life again with the fathers he will rejoice for ever without a grief. 2 Clement 19

These quotations prove that the author of this ancient sermon believed in the return of Christ; His eternal, earthly reign; and the resurrection. There is no hint of the Millennial Week. Contrary to the Millennial Week, he exhorted his listeners to "***expect, therefore, hour by hour, the kingdom of God in love and righteousness, since we know not the day of the appearing of God.***" This is a command to continual watchfulness. It is incompatible with chiliasm and it contradicts Tim's claim that "*We have no clear examples of any first or second century writers opposing chiliasm, or offering any theological points which are incompatible with chiliasm.*"

Didache (100-150): Extensive research has been conducted into the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*. I will not go over any of that but will simply cite the conclusion of Holmes that "*The Didache may have been put into its present form as late as 150, though a date considerably closer to the end of the first century seems more probable.*" Schaff places it probably "older than Barnabas" and "not later than 120." The 16th and final chapter of the Didache is entitled, "*Watchfulness; the Coming of the Lord.*" It reads,

1. Watch for your life's sake. Let not your lamps be quenched, nor your loins unloosed; but be ye ready, for ye know not the hour in which our Lord cometh. 2.

But often shall ye come together, seeking the things which are befitting to your souls: for the whole time of your faith will not profit you, if ye be not made perfect in the last time. 3. For in the last days false prophets and corrupters shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall be turned into hate; 4. for when lawlessness increaseth, they shall hate and persecute and betray one another, and then shall appear the world-deceiver as the Son of God, and shall do signs and wonders, and the earth shall be delivered into his hands, and he shall do iniquitous things which have never yet come to pass since the beginning. 5. Then shall the creation of men come into the fire of trial, and many shall be made to stumble and shall perish; but they that endure in their faith shall be saved from under the curse itself. 6. And then shall appear the signs of the truth; first, the sign of an out-spreading in heaven; then the sign of the sound of the trumpet; and the third, the resurrection of the dead; 7. yet not of all, but as it is said: The Lord shall come and all His saints with Him. 8. Then shall the world see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven.

This exhortation is to continual watchfulness in expectation of the soon coming of Christ. It is incompatible with chiliasm.

Summary of Late First and Early Second Century: Six authors or works are included in this time period. There is no name (such as “premillennialism,” “chiliasm,” “amillennialism,” or “historic premillennialism”) to describe the eschatology of these earliest Christians, because there was only one opinion. For the purposes of this survey, I will use the term “Primitive”⁸⁹ to describe this eschatology. The evidence from their own writings proves that the fathers of the first and early second centuries believed the following eschatology.

Primitive Eschatology

The first Christians believed in...

- (1) The Great Tribulation and the post-tribulation return of Christ,
- (2) The resurrection of the flesh to immortality with rewards for the righteous and punishment of the wicked,
- (3) The eternal reign and dominion of Christ on earth over the nations in a Kingdom which will have no end,
- (4) The eternal inheritance of the earth in fulfillment of the promises,
- (5) That these events could happen in any generation and perpetual watchfulness was required.

⁸⁹ “Primitive” with the following sense: earliest, first, original, primal, pristine, unspoiled, uncorrupted.

This was their eschatology without any controversy or complexity. No other doctrine of the end times can be shown to have existed.

There is no evidence that any of them believed in the immortality of the soul, heavenly destiny, or eternal conscious torment. There is also no evidence that any of them were chiliasts. That is to say, none of them can be shown to have taught or even to have heard of the Millennial Week. Consequently, despite Tim's claim that "*All of the earliest writers who had any kind of connection to the Apostles or their associates specifically endorsed chiliasm*," the truth is, **none of them did**.⁹⁰ That changes abruptly with the next writer known as Barnabas.

§D2: A new eschatology (chiliasm) enters the church by means of a personal prophecy.

From the perspective of eschatology, this next author's importance cannot be exaggerated. "Barnabas" is the source of chiliasm in the church, and because of the crucial importance of that statement, this must be considered in considerable depth.

***Barnabas (Author and Place unknown, 130-132):** The oldest statement of chiliasm (the Millennial Week) is found in the anonymous *Epistle of Barnabas*. Although there is a tradition attributing this epistle to Barnabas⁹¹ the companion of Paul, all of the internal evidence refutes this. Consequently, it would be more accurate to regard this author as "Pseudo-Barnabas." But to avoid any confusion, I will simply use the common designation, "Barnabas."

Occasion and Date

We do not know the *place* where Barnabas wrote. On the other hand, compared with other works and writers, it is quite straightforward to determine the *occasion and date* by means of the following passage in Chapter 16. Referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., Barnabas writes,

You now know that their hope was in vain. Furthermore, again He says: 'Behold, those who tore down this temple will build it themselves.'⁹² This is happening now. For because they went to war, it was torn down by their enemies, and now the very servants of their enemies will rebuild it. (Holmes Translation)

⁹⁰ That includes the first two of the twelve writers whom Tim specifically named as chiliasts.

⁹¹ In his footnote on Page 65, Tim appears to accept this tradition. He writes, "Early Christian writers attributed this epistle to Barnabas, Paul's companion. It was held in extremely high regard, so much so, that it was included along with the inspired New Testament books in some early Christian copies of the Scriptures."

⁹² This is the reading of Isaiah 49:17 in the LXX. Although Barnabas believed this was being fulfilled in his day, the context of Isaiah 49 refutes him.

The rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem after the destruction of 70 A.D. was performed by the Emperor Hadrian. The rebuilding was announced in 130 A.D. while Hadrian was on a grand tour of the empire's eastern provinces. Historians⁹³ believe that the rebuilding was completed before the Bar Kokhba Revolt of 132-136 A.D., and it is probable that the nature of the rebuilding contributed to that revolt. This is because the city was renamed "Aelia Capitolina." "Aelia" was the family name of Hadrian. "Capitolina" meant that the new city was dedicated to the false god Jupiter Capitolinus. The rebuilt temple on the temple mount was not the Jewish temple but rather a shrine to Jupiter.⁹⁴ Hadrian died in 138 A.D. Thus, the date of the epistle is known with unusual precision. Barnabas states that the servants of their enemies "*will build it anew*" (ἀνοικοδομήσουσιν – future tense) and that "*this is happening now*" (γίνεται – present indicative tense). This implies that the announcement had been made, construction begun, but the work was incomplete. And since he does not mention the unrest and the revolt that began in 132, that leaves a very small window of about two years for the date of this epistle.

Character of Barnabas as a Teacher and Writer

Since the epistle is anonymous, what can be known about "Barnabas" is only what we learn from the letter itself. The letter is anti-Jewish in the extreme.⁹⁵ Barnabas regarded himself as a possessor and dispenser of spiritual gifts including the gifts of supernatural knowledge and the gift prophecy. He considered himself to be a great prophet and teacher and to have far surpassed his readers in wisdom and knowledge. He believed that many prophecies were being given and fulfilled in his day. When he prophesies, he often borrows the jargon of Scripture, yet modifies it. He claims supernatural wisdom to interpret the Scriptures, but his interpretations are absurdly allegorical. The common theme in his allegorical interpretations is that God has forever rejected Israel and that all of the commandments, ordinances, and promises in the Old Testament have "spiritual" meanings for the church. The following passages reveal this.

Greetings, sons and daughters, in the name of the Lord who has loved us, in peace. Seeing that God's righteous acts toward you are so great and rich, I rejoice with an unbounded and overflowing joy over your blessed and glorious spirits; so deeply implanted is the grace of the spiritual gift that you have received! Therefore, I who also am hoping to be saved, **congratulate myself all the more** because among you I truly see that the Spirit has been poured out upon you from the riches of the Lord's fountain. Chapter 1

⁹³ <https://followinghadrian.com/2014/11/05/exploring-aelia-capitolina-hadrians-jerusalem/>

⁹⁴ Hadrian also built a Temple of Asclepius and Serapis on the site of the Pool of Bethesda and a Temple of Aphrodite which has since been converted into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

⁹⁵ Tim soft-pedals the anti-Jewish character of the epistle writing, "In general, the book seems to have been written to counter the Judaizing tendencies by Jewish Christians." (65, footnote)

Schaff translates the above clause in **bold** as “*I inwardly rejoice the more,*” but the correct translation of the clause διὸ καὶ μᾶλλον συγχαίρω ἑμαυτῷ is “*therefore, I also congratulate myself all the more,*” as in Holmes.⁹⁶ It appears that Barnabas “congratulates himself” in the sense of regarding himself as the agent of their having received the spiritual Gift. Continuing in Chapter 1, the next passage shows Barnabas’ attitude regarding himself and regarding prophecy.

Accordingly, since I have concluded that if I care enough about you to share something of what I have received, I will be rewarded for having ministered to such spirits, I have hastened to send you a brief note, so that along with your faith you might have perfect knowledge as well... For the Master has made known to us through the prophets things past and things present, and has given us a foretaste of things to come. Consequently, when we see these things come to pass, one thing after the other just as he predicted, we ought to make a richer and loftier offering out of reverence for him. Chapter 1

The things coming to pass “*one thing after the other*” include both Biblical and extra-biblical prophecies as we will see.

We ought to perceive, therefore (since we are not without understanding), the gracious intention of our Father, because he is speaking to us (ὅτι ἡμῖν λέγει = present tense) ... To us, therefore, he says this: ‘A sacrifice to God is a broken heart, an aroma pleasing to the Lord is a heart that glorifies its Father.’ Chapter 2

This saying, attributed to God, begins with a Scriptural quotation from Psalm 51:19 but transitions into words that are evidently Barnabas’ own. The footnote in Schaff states, “*There is nothing in Scripture corresponding to the last clause.*” Many modern day “prophecies” in the signs and wonders movement do the very same thing. The next passage is more on this theme.

We ought, therefore, to be exceedingly thankful to the Lord, because he has both made known to us the past and given us wisdom in the present circumstance, and with regard to future events we are not without understanding. Chapter 5

The next passage further reveals Barnabas’ claim to the prophetic gift and his attitude of superiority over his hearers. Although he frequently declares his humility and lowliness, he cannot conceal the pride beneath the surface. This is also common among modern day “prophets.

⁹⁶ I am using the Holmes’ translation throughout this discussion of Barnabas.

He who placed within us the implanted gift of his teaching⁹⁷ understands. No one has ever learned from me a more reliable word, but I know that you are worthy of it. Chapter 9

Here is another passage showing Barnabas' attitude and opinion regarding himself as a prophet.

By receiving the forgiveness of sins and setting our hope on the Name, we became new, created again from the beginning. Consequently God truly dwells in our dwelling-place – that is, in us. How? The word of his faith, the call of his promise, the wisdom of his righteous decrees, the commandments of his teaching, **he himself prophesying in us**, he himself dwelling in us; **opening to us who had been in bondage to death the door of the temple, which is the mouth**, and granting to us repentance, he leads us into the incorruptible temple. For the one who longs to be saved looks not to the man **but to the One who dwells and speaks in him, and is amazed by the fact that he had never before heard such words from the mouth of the speaker nor for his part ever desired to hear them.** This is the spiritual temple that is being built for the Lord. Chapter 16

Here is one last passage which demonstrates Barnabas' attitude of superiority over his readers.

To the extent that it is possible clearly to explain these things to you, I hope, in accordance with my desire, that I have not omitted anything of the matters relating to salvation. For if I should write to you about things present or things to come, you would never understand, because they are found in parables. So much, then, for these things. Chapter 17

Method of Interpretation and Teaching

There are dozens of passages I could quote that exemplify Barnabas' claims to supernatural insight to interpret all things Jewish in the Old Testament "spiritually." He does this with the sacrifices, fasts, historical events, covenants, holy days and feasts, goats, red heifers, circumcision, clean and unclean foods,⁹⁸ numbers and names etc. Out of dozens of examples, I have selected the following passage as representative. It is long, but I regard this as necessary to convey the pattern that Barnabas follows repeatedly in this epistle.

The usual pattern is this: (1) Barnabas takes some aspect of the commandments and ordinances that God gave "**to them**," that is, to the Jewish people and quotes it. (2) He

⁹⁷ A variant reading has "gift of his covenant," but the reading here seems to make more sense in context.

⁹⁸ Regarding unclean animals, Barnabas goes into great detail explaining the "spiritual" meaning of swine, eagles, hawks, crows, eels, octopus, cuttlefish, hares, hyenas, and weasels. He also goes into great depth explaining the meanings of clean animals.

gives his allegorical interpretation of it which he always ascribes to supernatural wisdom. (3) Finally, he adds either a known prophecy, or a personal prophetic word of knowledge or prediction which he claims to be the words of God “**to us**” or “**to me.**” These features are not necessarily in exact sequence, but they are almost always all present. Observe those features and that pattern in this passage. I will signify these three features of Barnabas’ pattern by means of **[brackets]** in this quotation.

[Identification of something Jewish] What does the other prophet, Moses, say **to them**? “Behold, thus says the Lord God: ‘Enter into the good land, which the Lord promised by oath to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and take possession of it as an inheritance, a land flowing with milk and honey.’” **[Allegorical Interpretation]** **But now learn what knowledge has to say:** set your hope upon Jesus, who is about to be revealed to you in the flesh. For man is earth suffering, for Adam was formed out of the face of the earth. What, therefore, does “into the good land, a land flowing with milk and honey” mean? Blessed is our Lord, brothers, **who endowed us with wisdom and understanding of his secrets.** For the prophet speaks a parable concerning the Lord; **who can understand it, except one who is wise and discerning** and loves his Lord? So, since he renewed us by the forgiveness of sins, **he made us men of another type, so that we should have the soul of children, as if he were creating us all over again.** For the Scripture speaks about us when he says to the Son: “Let us make man according to our image and likeness, and let them rule over the beasts of the earth and the birds of the air and the fish of the sea.” And when he saw that our creation was good, the Lord said, “Increase and multiply and fill the earth.” These things he said to the Son. **[Prophetic Word of Knowledge]** **Again, I will show you how the Lord speaks to us.** He made a second creation in the last days. **And the Lord says:** “Behold, I make the last things as the first.”⁹⁹ **[Allegorical Interpretation]** It was with reference to this, therefore, that the prophet proclaimed: “Enter into a land flowing with milk and honey, and rule over it.” Observe, then, that we have been created anew, just as he says once more in another prophet: “Behold, says the Lord, I will take away from these (that is to say, from those whom the Spirit of the Lord foresaw) their stone hearts, and put in hearts of flesh,” because he was about to be manifested in the flesh and to dwell in us. For the dwelling-place of our heart, my brothers, is a holy temple dedicated to the Lord. For the Lord says again: “And with what shall I appear before the Lord my God and be glorified? I will confess you in the congregation of my brothers, and I will sing to you in the midst of the congregation of the saints.” **Therefore we are the ones whom he brought into the good land.** So why, then, does he mention the “milk and honey? Because the infant is first nourished with honey, and then with milk. So in a similar manner we too, being nourished by faith in the promise and by the word, will live and rule over the earth. Chapter 6

⁹⁹ This is not a quotation of Scripture. These are Barnabas’ words and he is claiming that God is speaking to him.

Prophetic Revelation of the Millennial Week

With that background, I will now come to the passage in this epistle containing the Millennial Week reference which Tim quotes on Page 65. Because of its importance, I am quoting the entire chapter. This passage is still part of the series of teachings in which Barnabas takes all things Jewish in the Old Testament and applies an allegorical, “spiritual” meaning to them for the church. Following his usual pattern, he also adds a prophetic word of knowledge. The specific aspect of all things Jewish in this chapter is the Sabbath.

[Identification of something Jewish] Furthermore, concerning the Sabbath it is also written, in the “Ten Words” which he spoke to Moses face to face on Mount Sinai: “And sanctify the Lord’s Sabbath, with clean hands and a clean heart.” And in another place he says: “If my sons guard the Sabbath, then I will bestow my mercy upon them.” He speaks of the Sabbath at the beginning of the creation: “And God made the works of his hands in six days, and finished on the seventh day, and rested on it, and sanctified it.” **[Allegorical Interpretation]** Observe, children, what “he finished in six days” means. It means this: that in six thousand years the Lord will bring everything to an end, for with him a day signifies a thousand years. **[Prophetic Word of Knowledge]** **And he himself is bearing witness to me, saying, “Behold, the day of the Lord will be as a thousand years.”** Therefore, children, in six days – that is, in six thousand years – everything will be brought to an end. “And he rested on the seventh day.” This means: when his Son comes, he will destroy the time of the lawless one and will judge the ungodly and will change the sun and the moon and the stars, and then he will truly rest on the seventh day. Furthermore, he says: “You shall sanctify it with clean hands and a clean heart.” If, therefore, anyone now is able, by being clean of heart, to sanctify the day which God sanctified, we have been deceived in every respect. But if that is not the case, accordingly then we will truly rest and sanctify it only when we ourselves will be able to do so, after being justified and receiving the promise; when lawlessness no longer exists, and all things have been made new by the Lord, then we will be able to sanctify it, because we ourselves will have been sanctified first. Chapter 15

Let us look more closely at the words, “*And he himself is bearing witness to me saying, ‘Behold, the day of the Lord will be as a thousand years.’*” At first glance, this appears to be a quotation from either Psalm 90:4 or 2 Peter 3:8. It is neither. The Greek text is,

αὐτὸς δέ μοι μαρτυρεῖ, λέγων, ‘ Ἰδοὺ, ἡμέρα κυρίου ἔσται ὡς χίλια ἔτη.’

Let us examine this clause word by word.

αὐτὸς is the personal pronoun “he” in the emphatic position. This means “He Himself” referring to God.

μοι is the first person, singular, personal pronoun in the dative, “to me,” also in the emphatic position. The combination means “He himself... to me.”¹⁰⁰

μαρτυρεῖ λέγων means “is testifying, saying” or “is bearing witness, saying.” This construction MUST be followed by a direct quote. It is in the present tense of the verb “to testify” joined to the present participle of the verb “to speak.” This is a very emphatic claim to personal revelation from God.

Ἴδού, ἡμέρα κυρίου means, “Behold, the Day of the Lord.” This is not a quotation from Psalm 90 or 2 Peter 3:8, neither of which have “the Day of the Lord” nor the word “behold.” Psalm 90 has, “χίλια ἔτη ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς σου ὡς ἡ ἡμέρα ἢ ἐχθές ἥτις διῆλθεν,” which means, “a thousand years in your eyes are like yesterday when it is passed.” II Peter 3:8 has, “μία ἡμέρα παρὰ κυρίῳ ὡς χίλια ἔτη καὶ χίλια ἔτη ὡς ἡμέρα μία,” which means “One day with the Lord is like a thousand years and a thousand years are like one day.” Peter’s inspired allusion to Psalm 90 does NOT change the sense or meaning of the Psalm. But Barnabas’ prophetic word DOES change the sense.

ἔσται means “will be” and is in the future tense. Neither Psalm 90 nor Peter use the future tense. They are simple statements that “one day with the Lord is like a thousand years...” This is a statement of truth, not a prophecy. By incorporating the prophetic reference “the Day of the Lord” and including the future tense verb, Barnabas is inventing a prophecy.

In light of the emphatic expression he is making, and in light of the context of the book, it is obvious that **Barnabas is emphatically claiming to be giving a prophetic word, a new revelation. This new revelation is “the Millennial Week.”**

And he himself is bearing witness to me, saying, “Behold, the day of the Lord will be as a thousand years.” Therefore, children, in six days – that is, in six thousand years – everything will be brought to an end.

We now know exactly when (almost to the very year), how, and by whom the doctrine of the Millennial Week (chiliasm) entered the church.

¹⁰⁰ Barnabas is very consistent throughout the book to distinguish to whom God has spoken or is speaking. When he quotes the Old Testament concerning something he intends to allegorize, he almost always introduces the quotation as having been spoken to them, meaning to the Jews. When he quotes the New Testament, or even passages in the Old Testament that he considers to be spiritually directed to believers in Christ, he introduces the quotation as having been spoken to us. Because this is a personal prophecy, he uses the personal expression, to me.

Prophetic Revelation of the Eternal State

But there is more to Barnabas' prophecy. Let us pick up the quotation of Chapter 15 exactly where we left off.

[Identification of something Jewish] Finally, he says to them: "I cannot bear your new moons and Sabbaths." **[Allegorical Interpretation]** You see what he means: it is not the present Sabbaths that are acceptable to me, but the one that I have made; **[Prophetic Word of Knowledge]** on that Sabbath, after I have set everything at rest, **I will create the beginning of an eighth day, which is the beginning of another world.** This is why we spend the eighth day in celebration, the day on which Jesus both arose from the dead and, after appearing again, ascended into heaven. Chapter 15

In this passage, Barnabas is extending his new prophecy beyond the seventh millennium, and he is attributing these words to God even though there is no Scripture anywhere that says this. He represents God as saying, "...*after I have set everything at rest, I will create the beginning of an eighth day, which is the beginning of another world.*" Unfortunately, Barnabas did not include any details regarding this new world which begins on the eighth day. Consequently, his prophecy left a major gap which subsequent chiliasts (and modern premillennialists) have been obliged to fill in.

The Old Testament Promises to the Patriarchs and the Kingdom

It is significant that Barnabas never referred to the seventh millennium as "the kingdom." Nor did he connect the seventh millennium in any way with Israel, Jerusalem, the Abrahamic or Davidic covenants, the Temple, nor anything Jewish. To do so would have been utterly contrary to the entire, anti-Jewish tone of the epistle. Even in referring to it as the "Sabbath," Barnabas goes overboard to disconnect it from any association with the Jewish Sabbaths.

It is also significant that Barnabas places the judgement of the ungodly at the Second Coming. He makes no distinction between a judgment at His coming and the Great White Throne judgment 1,000 years later. This is how he concludes that during the seventh millennium, there will be no longer be any lawlessness.

What then becomes of all the promises in the Old Testament that God made to the patriarchs? We need to answer this question in order to obtain a complete picture of Barnabas' contribution to eschatology.

Regarding the Inheritance of the Land, recall from the previous quotation of Chapter 6 that Barnabas interprets this promise allegorically and claims that we Christians have

now entered and taken possession of the inheritance. We have entered the good land flowing with milk and honey.

Regarding the Temple, Barnabas teaches that the prophecies of the rebuilding of the Temple are now being fulfilled in the Christian church. He declares authoritatively,

Finally, I will also speak to you about the temple, and how those wretched men went astray and set their hope on the building, as though it were God's house, and not on their God who created them. For they, almost like the heathen, consecrated him by means of the temple... But let us inquire whether there is in fact a temple of God. There is – where he himself says he is building and completing it! For it is written: "And it will come to pass that when the week comes to an end God's temple will be built gloriously in the name of the Lord."¹⁰¹ I discover, therefore, that there is in fact a temple. How, then, will it be built in the name of the Lord? Learn! Before we believed in God, our heart's dwelling place was corrupt and weak, truly a temple built by human hands, because it was full of idolatry and was the home of demons, for we did whatever was contrary to God. "But it will be built in the name of the Lord." So pay attention, in order that the Lord's temple may be built gloriously. How? Learn! By receiving the forgiveness of sins and setting our hope on the Name, we became new, created again from the beginning. Consequently God truly dwells in our dwelling-place – that is, in us. Chapter 16

Regarding the Kingdom, Barnabas also interprets the Kingdom allegorically and applies it to the church in the present time. We are now living in the times of the Kingdom. Barnabas gives a lengthy commentary on the Day of Atonement. At the conclusion of this passage he declares,

Grasp how plainly he is speaking to you: the calf is Jesus; the sinful men who offer it are those who brought him to the slaughter. Then the men are no more; no more is the glory of sinners. The children who sprinkle are those who preached to us the good news about the forgiveness of sins and the purification of the heart, those to whom he gave the authority to proclaim the gospel; there were twelve of them as a witness to the tribes, because there are twelve tribes of Israel. And why are there three children who sprinkle? As a witness to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because these men were great in God's sight. And then there is the matter of the wool on the tree: this signifies that the kingdom of Jesus is on the tree, and that those who hope in him will live forever. But why the wool and the hyssop together? Because in his kingdom there will be dark and evil days, in which we will be saved, because the one who suffers in body is healed by means of the dark juice of the hyssop. So, that these things happened for this reason is obvious to us, but to them they were quite obscure, because they did not listen to the voice of the Lord. Chapter 8

¹⁰¹ This quotation does not occur in Scripture.

Original Chiliasm

The prophecy and doctrine of Barnabas presents a significant departure from the original teaching of the apostles and of the primitive eschatology of the earlier fathers. Before proceeding, let us summarize the features of Barnabas' new revelation in three points. Here, according to the "prophet" who invented it, is the original, unmodified definition of chiliasm.

Chiliasm

- (1) Millennial Week / Millennial Sabbath: Allegorical interpretation of the creation week means there will be six millennia followed by the return of Christ and the Millennial Sabbath. The return of Christ will take place at the end of the sixth millennium to destroy the lawless one (and all lawlessness), to judge the ungodly, to change the sun and the moon and the stars, and to make all things new. The seventh millennium will be a time of rest. Lawlessness will no longer exist. This is "*the true Sabbath of the righteous*." Only then will the Sabbath be sanctified.
- (2) Rejection of All Things Jewish: The period of time between the First Advent of Christ until His Second Advent is the time of the Kingdom. There will be no earthly reign of Christ. Christians have now inherited the Promised Land. All of the promises to the patriarchs are now being fulfilled in the church. The Sabbaths of the Jews (of the Old Testament) are not true and were despised by God and should be despised by Christians along with all things Jewish.
- (3) The Eternal State: After the Sabbath Rest of the seventh millennium ends, God will create another world at the beginning of the eighth day, the eighth millennium.

The *sine qua non*¹⁰² of chiliasm is contained in the first point: the Millennial Week including the Millennial Sabbath. If one believes that Barnabas was truly given this prophecy from the Holy Spirit, then there is little room for further inquiry. But if one doubts that Barnabas was a genuine prophet of God, then the question naturally arises whether he was speaking strictly on his own, or whether he was influenced from another source. This question MUST be answered before we continue with this historical survey of the Ante-Nicene ECFs.

§D3: The true source of Barnabas' chiliasm is shown to be Jewish myths and mysticism.

In light of Barnabas' obsession with, and low opinion toward, all things Jewish, the most probable (even if counterintuitive) source of external influence could be Jewish writings.

¹⁰² That is, the indispensable element without which chiliasm cannot exist.

In order to explore this question, I conducted a secondary survey of the Jewish Deuterocanon (Apocrypha) and the Pseudepigrapha.¹⁰³ As it turns out, the Jewish Pseudepigrapha is the true starting point for anyone wishing to trace the history of chiliasm. From these sources, I identified at least four works which contain the ideas which undoubtedly were the source from which Barnabas developed his teaching. The *Asatir – the Secret Moses* is a Samaritan book written in 250-200 B.C. The *Book of Jubilees* was written during the second century B.C. The *Life of Adam and Eve* was written toward the end of the first century B.C. or the beginning of the first century A.D. The *Apocalypse of 2 Enoch* was written during the first half of the first century A.D. Therefore, all four of these books had already existed during the lifetime of the apostles and while the New Testament was being written. They include works which circulated among multiple Jewish sects (Pharisees, Essenes, and Samaritans). As an educated Pharisee, Paul would certainly have been familiar with these writings. I will now present the significant findings from these sources. I am prefixing a star ☆ to these works to identify them as Jewish Pseudepigrapha rather than ECF writings.

Jewish Pseudepigrapha

☆ **Asatir - The Samaritan Book of the Secret Moses (250-200 B.C.):** The oldest of these writings is the *Asatir*. It is a sectarian book used by the Samaritan community. Like the *Book of Jubilees* but less well-known, it purports to be a revelation to Moses. Chapter 4 of the *Asatir* contains the history of Noah. Beginning at the 12th verse, it reads,

12. And God made with him [Noah] the covenant of the rainbow on the seventh [Sabbath]. And Noah dwelt in Ith at the rising of the sun (East) in Babel and he started teaching his children the principles of faith and the testimony. 13. And after sixty two years he divided the earth among his sons Shem, Ham and Japhet. 14. And to Shem he gave three portions and Japhet four and Ham four; Shem divided his portion, giving to Elam, Lud, Aram and Ashur four portions and Arpachshad one portion. 15. And he gave the *Book of Signs* to Arpachshad, and the *Book of Astronomy* to Elam and the *Book of the Wars* to Ashur. 16. And he made them the foremost of all his sons. 17. And Japhet divided the four portions among Gomer, Magog, Maddai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech and Tiras each one portion. 18. And Ham divided his land into four portions, Kush one portion and Mizraim one portion, Put one portion and Canaan one portion. 19. And when Noah had finished the division of the land by the astronomical calculation of the day, **he found that there were still four thousand three hundred years less seven years to come after the flood, of the six thousand from the beginning of the creation and three hundred and seven since the flood.** 20. For from

¹⁰³ Available online at <http://www.earlyjewishwritings.com/> except for the *Asatir*, which is only available in print.

the beginning of the days of Creation there shall be 6,000 years. 21. From the day of creation until the day of the visitation of the generations (through the flood) were one thousand three hundred and seven years.

★**The Book of Jubilees (153-105 B.C.):** According to the introductory comments by R.H. Charles in 1913, *Jubilees* was originally written by a Pharisee in Hebrew between 135-105 B.C. during the Maccabean era while John Hyrcanus was high priest. It was translated into Greek, Latin, Syriac, and various other contemporary languages. The version that has survived most intact is the Ethiopic. It was held as authoritative at Qumran where four fragments of the original Hebrew have been discovered. *Jubilees* is important for many reasons, not the least of which is that it was widely circulated and was familiar to the early Christians, most of whom held it in high regard. Some of the ECFs quoted from it.

The book makes a pretense of being an *oral* revelation given to Moses on Mount Sinai – in addition to the *written* revelation of the Torah. The essence of the book is a chronology from Adam until the day the Israelites entered the Land of Canaan with the years divided into year-weeks (seven years) and Jubilees (49 years).¹⁰⁴ It covers the same history as found in Genesis through Numbers, with numerous additional details consisting of fanciful myths and legends. Embedded in these myths are well-developed¹⁰⁵ doctrines of anthropology, angelology, and eschatology.

According to *Jubilees*, from Adam until God spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, there had been 2,410 years. God tells Moses that there will be 40 more years in the wilderness and then Israel will enter the Land of Canaan in the 50th Jubilee.

Wherefore I have ordained for thee the year-weeks and the years and the jubilees: there are forty-nine jubilees from the days of Adam until this day, [2410 A.M.] and one week and two years: and there are yet forty years to come [2450 A.M.] for learning the commandments of the Lord, until they pass over into the land of Canaan, crossing the Jordan to the west. *Jubilees 50:4*

Tim quotes a portion of the following passage. This is the earliest known source that interprets Psalm 90:4 as a correlation between one day and 1,000 years¹⁰⁶ as a chronological construct.

²⁹ And at the close of the nineteenth jubilee, in the seventh week in the sixth year [930 A.M.] thereof, Adam died, and all his sons buried him in the land of his creation, and he ³⁰ was the first to be buried in the earth. **And he lacked seventy years of one thousand years; for one thousand years are as one day in the**

¹⁰⁴ According to this book, the Jubilee cycle was 49 years, not 50 years as in Tim's chronology. The 50th Year of Jubilee, was simultaneously the First Year of the next cycle.

¹⁰⁵ "Well-developed" does not mean correct. It only means that these doctrines are detailed and specific.

¹⁰⁶ Justin and Irenaeus also quote this passage.

testimony of the heavens and therefore was it written concerning the tree of knowledge: 'On the day that ye eat thereof ye shall die.' For this reason he ³¹ did not complete the years of this day; for he died during it. *Jubilees 4*

The author expected a definite end to the cycle of Jubilees culminating in the Messianic Kingdom and an end of sin and of Satan, but he did not specify how many Jubilees this would take.

And the jubilees shall pass by, until Israel is cleansed from all guilt of fornication, and uncleanness, and pollution, and sin, and error, and dwells with confidence in all the land, and there shall be no more a Satan or any evil one, and the land shall be clean from that time for evermore. *Jubilees 50:5*

Regarding the Messiah, Jubilees describes him as a descendent of Judah who will be the king and the salvation of Israel. This is the only reference to the Messiah in Jubilees, but not the only reference to the Kingdom.

¹⁸ And to Judah he said: 'May the Lord give thee strength and power
To tread down all that hate thee;
A prince shalt thou be, thou and one of thy sons, over the sons of Jacob;
May thy name and the name of thy sons go forth and traverse every land and region.

Then shall the Gentiles fear before thy face,
And all the nations shall quake.

¹⁹ In thee shall be the help of Jacob,
And in thee be found the salvation of Israel.

²⁰ And when thou sittest on the throne of honour of thy righteousness
There shall be great peace for all the seed of the sons of the beloved;
Blessed be he that blesseth thee,
And all that hate thee and afflict thee and curse thee
Shall be rooted out and destroyed from the earth and be accursed.' *Jubilees 31*

The times of the Kingdom are described as coming after a long period of wickedness and suffering for Israel. But the Kingdom does not come suddenly, nor is it even described as coming with the advent of the King. It is described as coming gradually when "*children begin to study the Law and to seek the commandments.*"

¹¹ And all the generations which shall arise from this time until the day of the great judgment shall grow old quickly, before they complete two jubilees, and their knowledge shall forsake them by reason of their old age [and all their knowledge shall vanish away]. ¹² And in those days, if a man live a jubilee and a-half of years, they shall say regarding him: 'He has lived long, and the greater part of his days are pain and sorrow and ¹³ tribulation, and there is no peace: For calamity follows on calamity, and wound on wound, and tribulation on tribulation, and evil tidings on evil tidings, and illness on illness, and all evil judgments such

as these, one with another, illness and overthrow, and snow and frost and ice, and fever, and chills, and torpor, and famine, and death, and sword, and captivity, and all kinds of calamities and ¹⁴ pains.' And all these shall come on an evil generation, which transgresses on the earth: their works ¹⁵ are uncleanness and fornication, and pollution and abominations. Then they shall say: 'The days of the forefathers were many (even), unto a thousand years, and were good; but behold, the days of our life, if a man has lived many, are three score years and ten, and, if he is strong, four score years, ¹⁶ and those evil, and there is no peace in the days of this evil generation.' ... ²² And a great punishment shall befall the deeds of this generation from the Lord, and He will give them over to the sword and to ²³ judgment and to captivity, and to be plundered and devoured. And He will wake up against them the sinners of the Gentiles, who have neither mercy nor compassion, and who shall respect the person of none, neither old nor young, nor any one, for they are more wicked and strong to do evil than all the children of men. And they shall use violence against Israel and transgression against Jacob, And much blood shall be shed upon the earth, And there shall be none to gather and none to bury. ²⁴ In those days they shall cry aloud, And call and pray that they may be saved from the hand of the sinners, the Gentiles; But none shall be saved. ²⁵ And the heads of the children shall be white with grey hair, And a child of three weeks shall appear old like a man of one hundred years, And their stature shall be destroyed by tribulation and oppression. ²⁶ And in those days the children shall begin to study the laws, And to seek the commandments, And to return to the path of righteousness. *Jubilees 23*

As a result of this renewed seeking of the Law, there will be a gradual increase in longevity, peace, joy, and healing. There will no longer be a Satan, nor war, nor the infirmity that comes with age. There will not, however, be any resurrection of the flesh. After a lifespan of 1,000 years, the body will die, but the spirit, which is immortal, will continue to exist in the spirit realm with "*much joy*."

²⁷ And the days shall begin to grow many and increase amongst those children of men Till their days draw nigh to one thousand years. And to a greater number of years than (before) was the number of the days. ²⁸ And there shall be no old man nor one who is satisfied with his days, For all shall be (as) children and youths. ²⁹ And all their days they shall complete and live in peace and in joy, And there shall be no Satan nor any evil destroyer; For all their days shall be days of blessing and healing. ³⁰ And at that time the Lord will heal His servants, And they shall rise up and see great peace, And drive out their adversaries. And the righteous shall see and be thankful, And rejoice with joy for ever and ever, And shall see all their judgments and all their curses on their enemies. ³¹ And their bones shall rest in the earth, And their spirits shall have much joy, And they shall know that it is the Lord who executes judgment, And shows mercy to hundreds and thousands and to all that love Him. ³² And do thou, Moses, write down these

words; for thus are they written, and they record (them) on the heavenly tablets for a testimony for the generations for ever. *Jubilees 23*

As this shows, the concept of the immortality of the soul / spirit existed very early in Jewish tradition. It is surprising, however, that *Jubilees* does not contain any hope of a resurrection of the flesh and that so little emphasis is placed on the Messiah. The contribution of *Jubilees* to chiliasm is the correlation of one day to 1,000 years in the lifespan of Adam and his descendants.

★**The Life of Adam and Eve (First Century B.C.):** This work¹⁰⁷ was written toward the end of the first century B.C. or the beginning of the first century A.D. Three ancient translations exist: Greek, Latin, and Slavonic. The Slavonic version is incomplete. The Greek and Latin translations differ from each other in several places.

As the title suggests, the book claims to be a history of Adam and Eve from the day they were exiled from Paradise until the day of their deaths. Containing 51 chapters, and in contrast to the Bible's extremely short account, the book "enlarges" significantly on the biographies of our first parents. It contains additional accounts of Satan deceiving Eve and several conversations between Adam, Satan, and other angels. At one point, Satan reports to Adam that the reason he rebelled against God was because he (Satan) refused God's command to worship Adam (the image of God). The book records Adam as possessing secrets (including a knowledge of the future) which he had obtained by eating from the tree of knowledge that God warned him not to share with Cain because Cain was a man of wrath.

The book records that when Adam was in great pain on his death-bed, he sent Seth and Eve to the border of Paradise with instructions to beg for a drop of oil from the Tree of Life with which to ease the pains of death. On their way, Seth is bitten by a serpent. At this, a great argument ensues between the serpent and Eve and Seth. The serpent argues that he is enraged with Eve because it is on account of her transgression that he was cursed. Eve and Seth rebuke him for having the audacity to raise himself against "the image of God," whereupon the serpent retreats to his lair. When Eve and Seth finally reach Paradise, Michael the Archangel refuses their request saying that nothing from the Tree of Life will be given to them until "*the end of the times*."

Then shall all flesh be raised up from Adam till that great day, - all that shall be of the holy people. Then shall the delights of paradise be given to them and God shall be in their midst. And they shall no longer sin before his face, for the evil

¹⁰⁷ Regarding this ancient work, Leonhard Rost writes: "There can be no doubt that the lost original can be ascribed to a Jewish author who probably lived in Palestine—possibly toward the end of the first century B.C. The year A.D. 70 is the *terminus ante quem*, since the Temple—of Herod?—is still standing. The author may have had affinities with Essene circles, as the ascetic features (especially the Apocalypse's description of the physical separation of the sexes, even for animals) suggest."

heart shall be taken from them and there shall be given them a heart understanding the good and to serve God only.

When they return to Adam, Adam rebukes Eve harshly for bringing all this misery upon them through her transgression. While Adam is dying, Eve relates the story of their transgression and fall to all of Adam's assembled sons and daughters and grandchildren.

The following quotation from *The Life of Adam and Eve* records the last words and the death of Adam.¹⁰⁸ It is significant in tracing the history of chiliasm. I am supplying a large context for this quotation, but the crucial passage is toward the very end highlighted in **bold**.

And just as Michael the archangel had foretold, after six days came Adam's death. When Adam perceived that the hour of his death was at hand, he said to all his sons: 'Behold, I am nine hundred and thirty years old, and if I die, bury me towards the sunrising in the field of yonder dwelling.' And it came to pass that when he had finished all his discourse, he gave up the ghost. (Then) was the sun darkened and the moon and the stars for seven days, and Seth in his mourning embraced from above the body of his father, and Eve was looking on the ground with hands folded over her head, and all her children wept most bitterly. And behold, there appeared Michael the angel and stood at the head of Adam and said to Seth: 'Rise up from the body of thy father and come to me and see what is the doom of the Lord God concerning him. His creature is he, and God hath pitied him.' And all angels blew their trumpets, and cried: 'Blessed art thou, O Lord, for thou hast had pity on Thy creature.' Then Seth saw the hand of God stretched out holding Adam and he handed him over to Michael, saying: 'Let him be in thy charge till the day of Judgement in punishment, till the last years when I will convert his sorrow into joy. Then shall he sit on the throne of him who hath been his supplanter.' And the Lord said again to the angels Michael and Uriel: 'Bring me three linen clothes of byssus and spread them out over Adam and other linen clothes over Abel his son and bury Adam and Abel his son.' And all the 'powers' of angels marched before Adam, and the sleep of the dead was consecrated. And the angels Michael and Uriel buried Adam and Abel in the parts of Paradise, before the eyes of Seth and his mother [and no one else], and Michael and Uriel said: 'Just as ye have seen, in like manner, bury your dead.' Six days after, Adam died; and Eve perceived that she would die, (so) she assembled all her sons and daughters, Seth with thirty brothers and thirty sisters, and Eve said to all, 'Hear me, my children, and I will tell you what the archangel Michael said to us when I and your father transgressed the command of God. On account of your transgression, Our Lord will bring upon your race the anger of his judgement, first by water, the second time by fire; by these two, will the Lord judge the whole human race. But hearken unto me, my children. Make ye then

¹⁰⁸ I am quoting from the Latin version.

tables of stone and others of clay, and write on them, all my life and your father's (all) that ye have heard and seen from us. If by water the Lord judge our race, the tables of clay will be dissolved and the tables of stone will remain; but if by fire, the tables of stone will be broken up and the tables of clay will be baked (hard).' When Eve had said all this to her children, she spread out her hands to heaven in prayer, and bent her knees to the earth, and while she worshipped the Lord and gave him thanks, she gave up the ghost. Thereafter, all her children buried her with loud lamentation. When they had been mourning four days, (then) Michael the archangel appeared and said to Seth: **'Man of God, mourn not for thy dead more than six days, for on the seventh day is the sign of the resurrection and the rest of the age to come; on the seventh day the Lord rested from all His works.'** Thereupon Seth made the tables. *The Life of Adam and Eve* 45:1 - 51:3

The following is a translation of the Greek version of this final passage.

And thereafter Michael spake to Seth and saith: 'Lay out in this wise every man that dieth **till the day of the Resurrection.**' And after giving him this rule; he saith to him: **'Mourn not beyond six days, but on the seventh day, rest and rejoice on it, because on that very day, God rejoiceth (yea)** and we angels (too) with the righteous soul, who hath passed away from the earth.' Even thus spake the angel, and ascended into heaven, glorifying (God) and saying: 'Allelujah.'

This quotation demonstrates that the Creation Week and the Sabbath were perceived as a metaphor for the resurrection on the "last day" thus beginning the Seventh Day, the Age to Come. This passage does not contain any reference to six thousand years nor is there any indication of the duration of the "*rest of the age to come*." But it is an important early expression of a chiliastic idea in Jewish tradition.

✧**Apocalypse of II Enoch (First Half of First Century A.D.):** The next series of quotations is from the *Apocalypse of 2 Enoch*.¹⁰⁹ The book claims to be the personal account of Enoch recording his experiences on being carried up by angels through the heavens,¹¹⁰ and all that he saw and heard. While passing through the third heaven, Enoch sees two sides. On one side is Paradise full of flowering and fruitful trees and the Tree of Life. One of the angels says to him,

¹⁰⁹ Regarding this work, Leonhard Rost writes: "The association with the West is all the more remarkable in that the Greek recension of the book (which represents at least an important stage in the formation of the tradition, if not the crucial initial stage) undoubtedly came into being in Egypt within the circle of Hellenistic Jews who were influenced but not overwhelmed by the intellectual milieu represented by Philo. Since the author had before him Sirach, the Ethiopic Enoch, and the Wisdom of Solomon, but states the Temple was still standing (51, 59, 61, 62, 68), the work should probably be dated in the first half of the first century C.E. Its final form is due to a Christian revision in the Eastern Church dating from the seventh century." (*Judaism Outside the Hebrew Canon*, p. 112)

¹¹⁰ Enoch ascends successively through "the heavens." In one recension of the book, there are seven heavens. In a longer recension, there are ten.

This place, O Enoch, is prepared for the righteous, who endure all manner of offence from those that exasperate their souls, who avert their eyes from iniquity, and make righteous judgment, and give bread to the hungering, and cover the naked with clothing, and raise up the fallen, and help injured orphans, and who walk without fault before the face of the Lord, and serve him alone, and for them is prepared this place for eternal inheritance. *Apocalypse of 2 Enoch 9:1*

On the other (northern) side, he sees a terrible place “*and there were all manner of tortures in that place.*” One of the angels says to him,

This place, O Enoch, is prepared for those who dishonour God, who on earth practice sin against nature, which is child-corruption after the sodomitic fashion, magic-making, enchantments and devilish witchcrafts, and who boast of their wicked deeds, stealing, lies, calumnies, envy, rancour, fornication, murder, and who, accursed, steal the souls of men, who, seeing the poor take away their goods and themselves wax rich, injuring them for other men's goods; who being able to satisfy the empty, made the hungering to die; being able to clothe, stripped the naked; and who knew not their creator, and bowed to the soulless and lifeless gods, who cannot see nor hear, vain gods, who also built hewn images and bow down to unclean handiwork, for all these is prepared this place among these, for eternal inheritance. *Apocalypse of 2 Enoch 10:3*

While passing through the fifth heaven, Enoch sees “*the Grigori, of human appearance, and their size was greater than that of great giants and their faces withered, and the silence of their mouths perpetual.*” The angel explains that the Grigori were angels “*who with their prince Satanail rejected the Lord of light... and therefore God judged them with great judgment, and they weep for their brethren and they will be punished on the Lord's great day.*”

Finally Enoch reaches the highest heaven where he sees and speaks with God. He records his personal interview with God, who gives Enoch an extremely detailed account of the creation of the world and the creation of man. Regarding the creation of man, God tells Enoch,

On the sixth day I commanded my wisdom to create man from seven consistencies: one, his flesh from the earth; two, his blood from the dew; three, his eyes from the sun; four, his bones from stone; five, his intelligence from the swiftness of the angels and from cloud; six, his veins and his hair from the grass of the earth; seven, his soul from my breath and from the wind. And I gave him seven natures: to the flesh hearing, the eyes for sight, to the soul smell, the veins for touch, the blood for taste, the bones for endurance, to the intelligence sweetness [enjoyment]. *Apocalypse of 2 Enoch 30:10-11*

During this instruction, God also reveals to Enoch the duration and end of the world. God then sends Enoch back to earth so that he can teach his children what he learned.

And finally Enoch ascends back into heaven a second time. Regarding the duration and end of the world, God says,

I said to him: Earth you are, and into the earth whence I took you you shalt go, and I will not ruin you, but send you whence I took you. Then I can again receive you at My second presence.¹¹¹ And I blessed all my creatures visible and invisible. And Adam was five and half hours in paradise. And I blessed the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, on which he rested from all his works. And I appointed the eighth day also, that the eighth day should be the first-created after my work, **and that the first seven revolve in the form of the seventh thousand, and that at the beginning of the eighth thousand there should be a time of not-counting, endless, with neither years nor months nor weeks nor days nor hours.** *Apocalypse of 2 Enoch 32:1-33:1*

This passage reveals a crucial stage in the development of chiliastic thinking in Jewish tradition. According to this book, the created, physical world will endure for seven thousand years. After the end of these seven thousand years, God will make a new creation at the beginning of the eight thousandth year and thereafter there will no longer be any reckoning of time.

Summary of Pseudepigrapha: As the quotations from these four books prove, almost all of the features of Barnabas' prophecy existed in Jewish tradition before he made it. These include (1) the duration of Creation in its present state for 6,000 years, (2) the correlation between one day and a thousand years, (3) the week of seven days corresponding to seven thousand years, (4) the Sabbath corresponding to the resurrection and the seventh millennium of rest, and (5) the eighth day corresponding to the beginning of a new world in which the passage of time is no longer measured (the eternal state). All five of these features are included in Barnabas' prophecy. The only things that Barnabas added to these already existing concepts when giving his "prophecy" were the second advent of Christ at the end of the sixth millennium and a repudiation of all things Jewish, including the literal weekly Sabbath. He also repudiated all of the promises made to the patriarchs and the kingdom centered in Jerusalem. This evidence proves that rather than prophesying an entirely new doctrine, Barnabas simply connected the dots already present in Jewish tradition and modified them to fit a radically new, pseudo-Christian paradigm. **All of these Jewish myths were known to, and rejected by, the apostles.** Barnabas simply failed to heed the apostles' warnings.

§D4: The period of the Mid – Late Second Century (after Barnabas) is a period of transition away from the primitive eschatology. Barnabas' chiliasm gives birth to two new systems: historic premillennialism and amillennialism.

¹¹¹ "My second presence" is a reference to the fact that Enoch was caught up twice into the heavens.

With Barnabas, the unanimity and simplicity of the Primitive eschatology was overthrown. Let us see now how this new “prophecy” affected the Christian writers who followed Barnabas. With the advent of a radically new doctrine, there are certain things that we would logically expect to find and in fact we do. There was a gradual and partial acceptance of the features of the new revelation. Among those who accept it, there was a period of transition as the new revelation was incorporated and accommodated into the earlier hope. There was a transition from the earlier expectation that the Lord’s coming could be very soon to a new expectation that it will be farther in the future. There are unmistakable indications that later chiliasts were dependent on Barnabas’ revelation and interpretation. Later writers added details and modified the new doctrine, especially regarding the “eighth day” which Barnabas had left undefined and unexplored.

***Papias (Hierapolis, Phrygia, 130-140, Martyred 163):** Papias wrote a five volume work titled, “*Expositions of the Sayings of the Lord.*” Holmes dates this work “probably within a decade or so of 130.” Tragically, this treasure has been lost. All that we have are a few fragments preserved by later writers. Tim claims that Papias taught chiliasm. He writes,

He [Papias] wrote a great deal about chiliasm. Unfortunately, all of his original works are lost. All that remains are references to him and quotations from his works by later writers. (64)

The only evidence Tim cites for his claim is the quotation from Anastasius of Sinai on pages 64-65 of his book. It is Fragment IX as found in Schaff. This edition of the ECFs contains a total of ten fragments of Papias. The more complete edition by Holmes contains several additional fragments discovered since the time of Schaff. It also includes all known references to Papias in other writers for a total of 26 fragments. Having read all of this material, I can say with confidence that they confirm that Papias believed in the resurrection and the literal, earthly reign of Christ following His second advent. Since he most likely wrote at approximately the same time as Barnabas, it is not known whether or not he was familiar with Barnabas’ prophecy. He may have written before Barnabas. In any case, none of the fragments from his writings contain any reference to the Millennial Week. Most likely he held to the primitive eschatology. There is no evidence to corroborate Tim’s claim that “*Papias wrote a great deal about chiliasm*” or that he had even heard of it.

***Justin Martyr (Samaria, 138-161, Martyred 165):** Justin was born in Samaria, but traveled extensively. He wrote during the reign of Antoninus Pius, who reigned from 138-161 succeeding Hadrian. Justin’s writings are possibly the first following the *Epistle of Barnabas*. Justin’s period of writing covers approximately two decades beginning roughly five or six years after Barnabas’ prophecy. Seven books written by Justin have

been preserved in whole or in fragments. The three most important and best attested are the two *Apologies* and his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*. The two apologies, written to the Emperor Antonius and the Senate respectively, are the earliest. The *Dialogue* was written later.

Tim lists Justin as a chiliast,¹¹² but the only evidence he provides on Page 64 is the quotation from Anastasius of Sinai. That quotation does not prove that Justin was a chiliast. This raises the question, was Justin really a chiliast? As it turns out, none of Justin's existing writings teach the Millennial Week. Nor is there any mention of the Millennial Sabbath.

His writings, especially in the *Dialogue*, contain detailed discussions on the Second Coming of Christ, the resurrection, and Christ's reign in Jerusalem. Since we have so much evidence from his own writings, it is not necessary to depend on Anastasius.

We know that Justin believed that the distribution and exercise of the gift of prophecy continued in his day and there are distinct indications that he accepted some features of Barnabas' prophecy. He said to Trypho,

"Therefore, just as God did not inflict His anger on account of those seven thousand men, even so He has now neither yet inflicted judgment, nor does inflict it, knowing that daily some [of you] are becoming disciples in the name of Christ, and quitting the path of error; who are also receiving gifts, each as he is worthy, illumined through the name of this Christ. For one receives the spirit of understanding, another of counsel, another of strength, another of healing, another of foreknowledge, another of teaching, and another of the fear of God." To this Trypho said to me, "I wish you knew that you are beside yourself, talking these sentiments." And I said to him, "Listen, O friend, for I am not mad or beside myself; but it was prophesied that, after the ascent of Christ to heaven, He would deliver us from error and give us gifts. The words are these: 'He ascended up on high; He led captivity captive; He gave gifts to men.'" *Dialogue with Trypho* Chapter 39

For the prophetical gifts remain with us, even to the present time. And hence you ought to understand that [the gifts] formerly among your nation have been transferred to us. And just as there were false prophets contemporaneous with your holy prophets, so are there now many false teachers amongst us, of whom our Lord forewarned us to beware; so that in no respect are we deficient, since we know that He foreknew all that would happen to us after His resurrection from the dead and ascension to heaven. *Dialogue*, Chapter 82

¹¹² Tim claims not only that Justin was a chiliast, but he also writes, "*Justin Martyr called the opponents of chiliasm 'heretics' (referring to the Gnostic cults) and indicated that they denied the resurrection of the body, which was a cardinal tenet of the Apostolic Faith.*"

Justin's purpose in the Dialogue is to persuade Trypho to become a Christian. Trypho asks many questions, including the following.

Then he replied, "Let these things be so as you say—namely, that it was foretold Christ would suffer, and be called a stone; and after His first appearance, in which it had been announced He would suffer, would come in glory, and be Judge finally of all, and eternal King and Priest. Now show if this man be He of whom these prophecies were made." *Dialogue*, Chapter 36

And Trypho replied, "Now, then, render us the proof that this man who you say was crucified and ascended into heaven is the Christ of God. For you have sufficiently proved by means of the Scriptures previously quoted by you, that it is declared in the Scriptures that Christ must suffer, and come again with glory, and receive the eternal kingdom over all the nations, every kingdom being made subject to Him: now show us that this man is He." *Dialogue*, Chapter 39

"But if some, even now, wish to live in the observance of the institutions given by Moses, and yet believe in this Jesus who was crucified, recognizing Him to be the Christ of God, and that it is given to Him to be absolute Judge of all, and that His is the everlasting kingdom, can they also be saved?" he inquired of me. *Dialogue*, Chapter 46

"But tell me, do you really admit that this place, Jerusalem, shall be rebuilt; and do you expect your people to be gathered together, and made joyful with Christ and the patriarchs, and the prophets, both the men of our nation, and other proselytes who joined them before your Christ came..." *Dialogue*, Chapter 80

Trypho's questions are essentially a summary of the prophecies and promises of the Messianic Kingdom. It is clear from his questions that *Trypho expects the Messiah to be an eternal priest and king and that His kingdom will have no end*. Trypho is asking Justin whether he believes in the literal fulfillment of these promises *AND* if he believes that the Christians will be included with the Jews in these promises. Justin responds to these questions with brilliant and lengthy reasoning from the Old Testament promises and prophecies using literal interpretation. On almost every point, Trypho is compelled by the evidence to admit the truth of Justin's position. But on the specific question of the duration of the kingdom, Justin is ambivalent. He does not definitively confirm Trypho's expectation of an eternal kingdom. Tim does not see it this way and he writes,

Justin and Irenaeus agreed that the Kingdom would continue on earth after the end of the Millennium, and the final judgment. (119)

As evidence, Tim supplies a quotation from Irenaeus which I will address when I come to Irenaeus. In a footnote to this quotation, Tim writes, "*See also Justin, Dialogue with Trypho, chs. xxxi - xxxix.*" In these chapters, Justin quotes and alludes to passages that refer to the eternal kingdom, but he never commits to interpreting these passages as

though the Messianic Kingdom will have no end. The clearest statements that Justin makes concerning this particular point are in Chapters 80-82.¹¹³ There he expresses the opinion that the promises will be fulfilled in the times of a future, temporal, Messianic Kingdom. Justin answers as follows.

For I choose to follow not men or men's doctrines, but God and the doctrines [delivered] by Him. For if you have fallen in with some who are called Christians, but who do not admit this [truth], and venture to blaspheme the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; who say there is no resurrection of the dead, and that their souls, when they die, are taken to heaven; do not imagine that they are Christians, even as one, if he would rightly consider it, would not admit that the Sadducees, or similar sects of Genistæ, Meristæ, Galilæans, Hellenists, Pharisees, Baptists, are Jews (do not hear me impatiently when I tell you what I think), but are [only] called Jews and children of Abraham, worshipping God with the lips, as God Himself declared, but the heart was far from Him. But I and others, who are right-minded Christians on all points, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and **a thousand years in Jerusalem**, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, [as] the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare. *Dialogue with Trypho* Chapter 80

Justin clearly answers yes, he does believe in the literal fulfillment of the prophecies. But, whereas Trypho had repeatedly asked about an *eternal* kingdom, Justin qualifies his affirmative reply with the stipulation that the kingdom will have a finite duration of 1,000 years, terming it, "*a thousand years in Jerusalem.*" Immediately after this statement, Justin writes,

For Isaiah spake thus concerning this space of a thousand years...

He then proceeds to quote Isaiah 65:17-25 in support of his point. Following this lengthy quotation, Justin continues.

Now we have understood that the expression used among these words, 'According to the days of the tree [of life] shall be the days of my people; the works of their toil shall abound' obscurely predicts a thousand years. For as Adam was told that in the day he ate of the tree he would die, we know that he did not complete a thousand years.¹¹⁴ **We have perceived, moreover, that the expression, 'The day of the Lord is as a thousand years,'¹¹⁵ is connected with this subject.** And further, there was a certain man with us, whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, who prophesied, by a revelation that was made to him, that those who believed in our Christ would dwell **a thousand years in Jerusalem**; and that thereafter the general, and, in short, the eternal

¹¹³ Tim discusses Justin's comments at length on Pages 106-112 of *Time of the End*.

¹¹⁴ This statement by Justin is taken from the *Book of Jubilees*.

¹¹⁵ This is Justin's quotation of Barnabas.

resurrection and judgment of all men would likewise take place. Just as our Lord also said, 'They shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but shall be equal to the angels, the children of the God of the resurrection.' *Dialogue with Trypho*
Chapter 81

Justin expressly states that the kingdom will endure for 1,000 years and thereafter will commence a different mode of existence. This statement reflects a partial acceptance of Barnabas' prophecy. First, what does he appear to accept? Justin confirms the correlation of one day with 1,000 years. He appears to quote Barnabas' prophecy that "*The Day of the Lord [is] as a thousand years.*"

This approaches chiliasm. However, Justin never says anything about the kingdom being preceded by 6,000 years, nor does he call this period the "rest" nor the "Sabbath," nor does Justin make any connection with the creation week, even though this context would be the perfect place to do so. Despite the abundant works that we have preserved from Justin, **neither the *Dialogue* nor any other of Justin's writings teach the Millennial Week. The *sine qua non* of chiliasm is missing.**

What does Justin appear to repudiate? In contrast to Barnabas, Justin does not express any anti-Jewish sentiment, nor does he allegorize the promises as being fulfilled now in the church. He believes in the literal, future fulfillment of the promises made to the patriarchs, except that he limits their duration.

In what way does Justin express the idea that the kingdom will terminate after 1,000 years at the commencement of a different mode of existence? Besides the repeated statements that it will last 1,000 years, note the last part of Justin's statement quoted above.

...those who believed in our Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem; and that thereafter the general, and, in short, the eternal resurrection and judgment of all men would likewise take place. Just as our Lord also said, 'They shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but shall be equal to the angels, the children of the God of the resurrection.'

Referring to the second resurrection that takes place after the 1,000 years of Satan's having been bound,¹¹⁶ Justin describes this resurrection as "*the eternal resurrection of all men*" and connects it with Jesus statement in Luke 20:34-36.

³⁴ Jesus answered and said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. ³⁵ But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; ³⁶ nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

¹¹⁶ Revelation 20:3

Justin associated this statement of Jesus with the second resurrection rather than the first and he called the second resurrection “*the eternal resurrection.*” This strongly suggests that Justin accepted the last part of Barnabas’ prophecy that after the seventh millennium ends, God will create another world (the eternal state) at the beginning of the eighth day in which the righteous will be equal to the angels.

One more quotation will be instructive. Justin was a brilliant defender of the physical, bodily resurrection. In his work, *On the Resurrection*, he wrote the following.

*“If He had no need of the flesh, why did He heal it? And what is most forcible of all, He raised the dead. Why? Was it not to show what the resurrection should be? How then did He raise the dead? Their souls or their bodies? Manifestly both. If the resurrection were only spiritual, it was requisite that He, in raising the dead, should show the body lying apart by itself, and the soul living apart by itself. But now He did not do so, but raised the body, confirming in it the promise of life. Why did He rise in the flesh in which He suffered, unless to show the resurrection of the flesh? And wishing to confirm this, when His disciples did not know whether to believe He had truly risen in the body, and were looking upon Him and doubting, He said to them, “Ye have not yet faith, see that it is I”; and He let them handle Him, and showed them the prints of the nails in His hands. And when they were by every kind of proof persuaded that it was Himself, and in the body, they asked Him to eat with them, that they might thus still more accurately ascertain that He had in verity risen bodily; and He did eat honey-comb and fish. **And when He had thus shown them that there is truly a resurrection of the flesh, wishing to show them this also, that it is not impossible for flesh to ascend into heaven (as He had said that our dwelling-place is in heaven), “He was taken up into heaven while they beheld,” as He was in the flesh.** If, therefore, after all that has been said, any one demand demonstration of the resurrection, he is in no respect different from the Sadducees, since the resurrection of the flesh is the power of God, and, being above all reasoning, is established by faith, and seen in works.”* (Justin, *On the Resurrection*, Chapter IX)

It is apparent from this statement that Justin believed that the righteous may ascend in their resurrected bodies into Heaven. I will say more about this when I come to Irenaeus.

With this evidence, and because of his partial acceptance of Barnabas’ prophecy, Justin does not fit either the Primitive eschatology that existed prior to Barnabas nor does he fit the chiliasm of Barnabas. If he accepted the Millennial Week, it has not been preserved in any of his extant writings. Justin appears to have assimilated part of Barnabas’ prophecy and consequently, his views are best described as a compromise between the two. Justin’s eschatology is the earliest expression of what is now known as “Historic Premillennialism.”

Historic Premillennialism

- (1) There will be a Great Tribulation and a post-tribulation return of Christ. The resurrection of the flesh will take place with rewards for the righteous and punishment of the wicked.
- (2) There will be a millennial (1,000 year) reign of Christ on earth, in Jerusalem, over the nations. The inheritance and kingdom will last for 1,000 years in fulfillment of the promises. The kingdom will end after 1,000 years.
- (3) Following the Kingdom, there will be a new and different mode of existence in the eternal state.

Justin says very little about the eternal state, which is not unlike modern premillennialists. Recall that Barnabas had included no details about this new world which begins on “the eighth day.” So, we have a hint that Justin accepted this opinion, but Justin does not attempt to fill the gap left by Barnabas. Justin’s Historic Premillennial eschatology represents a transition, which is exactly what we would logically expect to find at this stage.

Tatian (Assyria, 150-170): Tatian was a disciple and contemporary of Justin. He wrote an *Hortatory Address to the Greeks*, in which he affirms the orthodox doctrines of God, and that God will raise us up restoring the substance of creation to its pristine condition. Based on the biographical information and dates given in the Introductions, it is probable that Tatian’s Address was written after Justin’s two apologies but before the Dialogue with Trypho.

And on this account we believe that there will be a resurrection of bodies after the consummation of all things; not, as the Stoics affirm, according to the return of certain cycles, the same things being produced and destroyed for no useful purpose, but a resurrection once for all, when our periods of existence are completed, and in consequence solely of the constitution of things under which men alone live, for the purpose of passing judgment upon them... Even though fire destroy all traces of my flesh, the world receives the vaporized matter; and though dispersed through rivers and seas, or torn in pieces by wild beasts, I am laid up in the storehouses of a wealthy Lord. And, although the poor and the godless know not what is stored up, yet God the Sovereign, when He pleases, will restore the substance that is visible to Him alone to its pristine condition.
Tatian, *Hortatory Address to the Greeks*, Chapter 6

If I am correct in dating Tatian's address, then this statement may reflect Justin's influence on Tatian *prior* to his concourse with the teaching and prophecy of Barnabas. In any case, this work proves that Tatian believed in the resurrection and the restoration of created things to their pristine condition. There is no evidence in this work that Tatian was a chiliast, but whether he should be included in the Primitive eschatology or considered a historic premillennialist is impossible to determine based on this writing. After Justin's death, Tatian departed from the fellowship of the church and founded an ascetic sect called the Encratites (the "Self-Controlled").

Theophilus of Antioch (Antioch, 168-181): Theophilus was an elder in the church at Antioch from 168 A.D. until his death in 181 or 188 A.D. His three books were written to his friend, Autolycus. Theophilus is the "father of Christian chronology." He wrote a history of the world and a detailed chronology which is contained in Chapters 17 - 26 of his third book. The chronology is complete from Adam until the death of Emperor Aurelius Verus. He wrote in summary,

And from the foundation of the world the whole time is thus traced, so far as its main epochs are concerned. From the creation of the world to the deluge were 2242 years. And from the deluge to the time when Abraham our forefather begat a son, 1036 years. And from Isaac, Abraham's son, to the time when the people dwelt with Moses in the desert, 660 years. And from the death of Moses and the rule of Joshua the son of Nun, to the death of the patriarch David, 498 years. And from the death of David and the reign of Solomon to the sojourning of the people in the land of Babylon, 518 years 6 months 10 days. And from the government of Cyrus to the death of the Emperor Aurelius Verus, 744 years. All the years from the creation of the world amount to a total of 5698 years, and the odd months and days. Theophilus of Antioch, *To Autolycus*, Book III, Chapter 28

Theophilus also wrote an extensive and extraordinarily beautiful commentary on the six days of creation and the Sabbath contained in his second book, chapters 10 – 21. In one place he writes,

Of this six days' work no man can give a worthy explanation and description of all its parts, not though he had ten thousand tongues and ten thousand mouths; nay, though he were to live ten thousand years, sojourning in this life, not even so could he utter anything worthy of these things, on account of the exceeding greatness and riches of the wisdom of God which there is in the six days' work above narrated. *To Autolycus*, Book II, Chapter 12

Theophilus' three books are in fact evangelistic in essence, written to persuade his friend Autolycus to believe in Christ. Included in these are discussions of the return of Christ, the resurrection, rewards, and punishments. Regarding the resurrection, he wrote this,

Most excellent is His wisdom. By His wisdom God founded the earth; and by knowledge He prepared the heavens; and by understanding were the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the clouds poured out their dews. If thou perceivest these things, O man, living chastely, and holily, and righteously, thou canst see God. But before all let faith and the fear of God have rule in thy heart, and then shalt thou understand these things. When thou shalt have put off the mortal, and put on incorruption, then shall thou see God worthily. For God will raise thy flesh immortal with thy soul; and then, having become immortal, thou shalt see the Immortal, if now you believe on Him; and then you shall know that you have spoken unjustly against Him. *To Autolycus*, Book I, Chapter 7

Although we have so much treasure from the coffers of this ancient man of God on the themes of the return of Christ, the resurrection, creation, the six days work and the Sabbath, history, and chronology, there is not a single mention of the Millennial Week. Theophilus believed in the resurrection as our final hope. He most likely held to the Primitive eschatology. There is no evidence that he was a chiliast.

Athenagoras (Athens 177): Athenagoras was an Athenian philosopher who became a Christian and an apologist for the Christians writing defenses to the emperors Aurelius and Commodus. He wrote his apologetic work *A Plea For the Christians* and his treatise *The Resurrection* in approximately 177 A.D, both addressed to the Roman emperors. His defense of the orthodox Christian faith and his refutation of the foolishness of Greek religion is brilliant. Athenagoras wrote beautifully in defense of the Christians' morals and of their belief in the resurrection of the body and judgment after resurrection with rewards and punishments. Athenagoras referred to "*the present life*" and rewards and punishments to be received in "*the future life*." He did not call the future life a "kingdom," but inasmuch as he was addressing the emperor, this is easy to understand. The evidence suggests that he held to the Primitive eschatology. There is certainly no mention of the Millennial Week.

Clement of Alexandria (Alexandria, 153-217): Head of the Alexandrian School founded by Pananeus, he wrote during the latter half of the second century into the first part of the third century. Whereas Justin and Athenagoras had been able to shed their earlier indoctrination in Greek philosophy in favor of the pure milk of the word when they became Christians, Clement did not. He retained his love for Greek philosophy, learning, and mysticism. He is noted for blending Greek philosophy with Christianity. As a direct consequence of this blending, he believed in a heavenly destiny and rejected any concept of an earthly reign of Christ. To him, like Barnabas, the Kingdom was the church of Christ and the church is where the promises are fulfilled. He believed in the resurrection of the flesh. Thus, he was neither a historic premillennialist nor a chiliast. He fully embraced the second point in Barnabas' chiliasm but rejected the first. Others may have held his opinions previously, but Clement is the first to write them down and

whose writings have been preserved. His writings are the seed which eventually became what we now know as *amillennialism*. In the remainder of this survey, I will refer to those who hold this view as “amillennial.” He was also very influential and those who followed him in the Alexandrian school became the chief proponents of amillennialism.

Amillennialism

- (1) There will be no physical, personal reign of Christ and His saints on earth over the nations. The 1,000 years in Revelation 20 is symbolic.
- (2) The Kingdom of God is the church. The promises to the patriarchs are all now being fulfilled “spiritually” by the church.
- (3) Christ will return and immediately usher in the eternal state, the “new heavens and new earth.” The resurrection of the flesh will take place with eternal rewards for the righteous and eternal punishment of the wicked.

***Irenaeus (Smyrna → Lyons, Gaul 182-188):** Irenaeus was an elder of a church in Lyons, Gaul. He wrote his masterful five-volume work, *Against Heresies*, around 182-188 to refute Gnosticism. He was martyred in 202. He is one of the twelve named by Tim as teaching chiliasm.

Although the basic philosophical ideas are ancient, the Gnosticism with which Irenaeus and other fathers contended sprang up in the late first century and flourished within Jewish, Samaritan, and Christian communities throughout the second century. There were dozens of gnostic sects. Irenaeus perceived Gnosticism as a mortal danger to the church. No doubt in his interaction with and successful refutation of the gnostic teachers, Irenaeus honed his skills as a teacher and apologist. In my personal estimation, Irenaeus was among the best and wisest of the ECFs. In his defense of the truth, his quality of exposition, and his pastoral fidelity, he is easily the best of the chiliasts, if not the best of all. He was indeed a chiliast and the first apologist for chiliasm. He writes more about eschatology than any of the fathers before him, especially in Book V. Chapters 25-36 of Book V are entirely devoted to eschatology.

Irenaeus – the Resurrection and the Kingdom

Irenaeus was brilliant in his teaching and defense of the literal resurrection of the body and of the future kingdom of Christ on earth, reigning from His throne in Jerusalem. Irenaeus based his defense of these doctrines on the promises to Abraham and David and the many prophecies in both the Old and New Testament Scriptures. Insofar as

Irenaeus taught that all these prophecies will be fulfilled literally, he was abiding faithfully in the teaching that had been received from the apostles and prophets and passed down from the earlier disciples of the apostles.

Irenaeus and Barnabas

Despite the wealth of benefit contained in Irenaeus' writings, there are a few defects. All of these can be traced directly to and blamed squarely on the chiliasm that he received from Barnabas.

Tim provides two quotations from Irenaeus on Page 66 and one on Page 71 to prove that Irenaeus was a chiliast. In light of what we have learned from Barnabas, the quotations provided by Tim take on additional significance. There is evidence of Irenaeus' dependence on Barnabas which is consistent with what we would logically expect to find. Also, Irenaeus accepted more of Barnabas' prophecy than Justin did.

Irenaeus – Spiritual Gifts

We know that Irenaeus believed that the spiritual gifts, including the gift of prophecy, were still in full operation in his day. He wrote,

Wherefore, also, those who are in truth His disciples, receiving grace from Him, do in His name perform [miracles], so as to promote the welfare of other men, according to the gift which each one has received from Him. For some do certainly and truly drive out devils, so that those who have thus been cleansed from evil spirits frequently both believe [in Christ], and join themselves to the Church. **Others have foreknowledge of things to come: they see visions, and utter prophetic expressions.** Others still, heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. Yea, moreover, as I have said, the dead even have been raised up, and remained among us for many years. And what shall I more say? It is not possible to name the number of the gifts which the Church, [scattered] throughout the whole world, has received from God, in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and which she exerts day by day for the benefit of the Gentiles, neither practicing deception upon any, nor taking any reward from them [on account of such miraculous interpositions]. For as she has received freely from God, freely also does she minister [to others]. Against Heresies, Book II, Chapter 32

This is not the place to comment on the modern day controversies regarding spiritual gifts. This is mentioned because Irenaeus' opinion on the continuation of the prophetic gift in his day no doubt disposed him to be receptive to the teaching and prophesying of Barnabas.

Irenaeus – the Millennial Week and Millennial Sabbath

The first quotation¹¹⁷ provided by Tim shows that Irenaeus clearly believed in the Millennial Week and the Millennial Sabbath. But when this quotation is read in its original context, it shows that Irenaeus defended the Millennial Week by means of allegory. It also demonstrates his dependence on Barnabas' prophecy. The quotation appears as follows in *Time of the End*.

[He gives this] as a summing up of the whole of that apostasy which has taken place during six thousand years. For in as many days as this world was made, in so many thousand years shall it be concluded. And for this reason the Scripture says: 'Thus the heaven and the earth were finished, and all their adornment. And God brought to a conclusion upon the sixth day the works that He had made; and God rested upon the seventh day from all His works.' This is an account of the things formerly created, as also it is a prophecy of what is to come. For the day of the Lord is as a thousand years; and in six days created things were completed: it is evident, therefore, that they will come to an end at the sixth thousandth year ... the whole apostasy of six thousand years, and unrighteousness, and wickedness, and false prophecy, and deception; for which things' sake a cataclysm of fire shall also come [upon the earth]. (66)

What does the word "this," in the opening words – "*he gives this*" – refer to? If we back up the quotation a few lines, we can find out. Irenaeus was in the midst of writing about the Dragon, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet in Revelation 13. He had just written,

"And he shall order an image of the beast to be made, and he shall give breath to the image, so that the image shall speak; and he shall cause those to be slain who will not adore it." He says also: "And he will cause a mark [to be put] in the forehead and in the right hand, that no one may be able to buy or sell, unless he who has the mark of the name of the beast or the number of his name; and the number is six hundred and sixty-six," that is, six times a hundred, six times ten, and six units. [He gives this] as a summing up of the whole of that apostasy which has taken place during six thousand years.

Irenaeus was interpreting the mark of the beast (the number 666) to be an allegorical symbol of the first 6,000 years of human history. Irenaeus then goes on to interpret the creation week as an allegory of these 6,000 years. But he is not finished with allegory there. Note the ellipse in Tim's quotation of the words, "*it is evident, therefore, that they will come to an end at the sixth thousandth year ... the whole apostasy of six thousand years.*"

¹¹⁷ From *Against Heresies*, Book V, Chapter 28

The ellipse between the words “year” and “the whole apostasy” is significant. The words before the ellipse belong to Chapter 28. The words after the ellipse belong to Chapter 29. A large amount of text has been omitted. What has been omitted is Irenaeus’ discussion of the great deluge and the apostasy of the angels in Noah’s 600th year, and the image set up by King Nebuchadnezzar whose height was sixty cubits and whose breadth was six cubits. Irenaeus interprets these references to the number six (and multiples thereof) allegorically as symbols of 6,000 years. He writes,

For that image which was set up by Nebuchadnezzar had indeed a height of sixty cubits, while the breadth was six cubits; on account of which Ananias, Azarias, and Misaël, when they did not worship it, were cast into a furnace of fire, pointing out prophetically, by what happened to them, the wrath against the righteous which shall arise towards the [time of the] end. For that image, taken as a whole, was a prefiguring of this man’s coming, decreeing that he should undoubtedly himself alone be worshipped by all men. **Thus, then, the six hundred years of Noah**, in whose time the deluge occurred because of the apostasy, **and the number of the cubits of the image** for which these just men were sent into the fiery furnace, do indicate the number of the name of that man in whom is concentrated **the whole apostasy of six thousand years**, and unrighteousness, and wickedness, and false prophecy, and deception; for which things’ sake a cataclysm of fire shall also come [upon the earth].

The first quotation supplied by Tim is important because in the very place where we would expect Irenaeus to cite apostolic authority, tradition, or source for the Millennial Week, he does not do so. Instead, when we read it in its original context, it shows that Irenaeus based his defense of the Millennial Week on allegorical interpretations of Scripture based on obscure references to the number six including the creation week, the Mark of the Beast (666), the height of Nebuchadnezzar’s statue, and the six hundred years of Noah. This recourse to pure allegory is not the quality of exposition we usually find in Irenaeus and it constitutes a defect in his exposition. On the other hand, it is characteristic of Barnabas and *ALL* of the chiliasts who followed him. Barnabas was the archetype for this method of interpretation. This constitutes considerable evidence that Irenaeus was borrowing Barnabas’ method of hermeneutics in his defense of chiliasm. Yet there is still more evidence in this quotation that is even more concrete. Note these words once again,

This is an account of the things formerly created, as also it is a prophecy of what is to come. **For the Day of the Lord is as a thousand years...** (Irenaeus)

What is remarkable about this is that Irenaeus makes reference to “a *prophecy*” and then he quotes it, “*for the Day of the Lord is as a thousand years.*” But there is no prophecy in Scripture that says this. These were the words of Barnabas. Irenaeus is quoting Barnabas and calling it “prophecy.”

In this same passage,

“...and in six days created things were completed: it is evident, therefore, that they will come to an end at the sixth thousandth year.” (Irenaeus)

Compare this with Barnabas’ words,

Therefore, children, in six days – that is, in six thousand years – everything will be brought to an end.” (Barnabas)

The similarity of wording strongly suggests that Irenaeus was dependent on Barnabas, if not actually quoting¹¹⁸ him.

Irenaeus – the Times of the Kingdom

The second defect in Irenaeus’ teaching is regarding the duration of the Kingdom. In spite of Tim’s claim that Justin and Irenaeus both taught that the kingdom would continue after the Millennium, the truth is neither of them did. Irenaeus clearly distinguishes between “***the times of the kingdom***” and the time “***after the kingdom***.” In Irenaeus, the “times of the kingdom” are equivalent to the Millennial Sabbath and are characterized by the resurrection, the inheritance of the Land, the reign of Christ from His throne in the ancient city of Jerusalem, and the restoration of the creation to its pristine condition. On all of these points Irenaeus interprets the Scriptures literally and faithfully, except that he limits their duration to 1,000 years. Here is the second quotation from Irenaeus that Tim supplies from Book V, Chapter 33.

These are [to take place] in the times of the kingdom, that is, upon the seventh day, which has been sanctified, in which God rested from all the works which He created, which is the true Sabbath of the righteous, which they shall not be engaged in any earthly occupation; but shall have a table at hand prepared for them by God, supplying them with all sorts of dishes. (66)

In the context, “these” refers to the rewards for faithful service. These rewards will be received “*in the times of the kingdom*.” But compare the first part of this quotation with Barnabas.

If, therefore, anyone now is able, by being clean of heart, to sanctify the day which God sanctified, we have been deceived in every respect... When lawlessness no longer exists, and all things have been made new by the Lord,

¹¹⁸ We do not have the original Greek of Irenaeus except for a few fragments. His entire works have been preserved only in the Latin translation.

then we will be able to sanctify it, because we ourselves will have been sanctified first... You see what he means: it is not the present Sabbaths that are acceptable to me, but the one that I have made; on that Sabbath, after I have set everything at rest.

It is unmistakable that Irenaeus' chiliasm is directly based on Barnabas' prophecy. Irenaeus quoted Barnabas; he cited Barnabas' words as "prophecy"; and he employs the same allegorical interpretation in defense of chiliasm.¹¹⁹ The only difference between them is that whereas Barnabas allegorized all of the prophecies and promises about the kingdom and referred them to the present age, Irenaeus believed in the literal fulfillment of the promises during the Millennial Sabbath, which he called the "*times of the kingdom*." Thus, Irenaeus rejected one error of Barnabas; nevertheless, the door was cracked open to another.

Irenaeus – the End of the Kingdom, the Eternal State, and the Destiny of the Redeemed

The last point of Barnabas' prophecy was the end of the Millennial Sabbath and the beginning of a new world on the eighth day. Barnabas did not elaborate on this portion of his prophecy leaving a significant gap. Justin only hinted at it. In contrast, Irenaeus was innovative and added significant details about the end of the kingdom and the new mode of existence that would commence afterward. This constitutes the third defect in Irenaeus' teaching that he inherited from Barnabas and which is a consequence of chiliasm.

In Book V Chapter 35 of *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus explicitly distinguishes two periods of time: (1) "*in the times of the Kingdom*," and (2) "*after the times of the kingdom*." Both periods have their distinct enjoyments.

During the times of the kingdom, the redeemed will be resurrected to enjoy the fulfillment of all of the promises made to the patriarchs here in this creation which will have been restored to its pristine condition. *After* the times of the kingdom, there will be a New Heavens and New Earth (NHNE) because the present heavens and earth will "*pass away*." Irenaeus said this does not mean the annihilation of the substance nor the essence of the creation but a "progression." *After* the times of the kingdom in the NHNE, the redeemed will enjoy "*those things which neither the eye has seen, nor the ear has heard, nor has thought concerning them arisen within the heart of man*."

What are these enjoyments in the NHNE? Before quoting the next passage from Irenaeus, recall this quotation from Justin from the previous section regarding the resurrection.

¹¹⁹ However, Irenaeus did NOT adopt the anti-Jewish mindset of Barnabas.

Why did He rise in the flesh in which He suffered, unless to show the resurrection of the flesh? And wishing to confirm this, when His disciples did not know whether to believe He had truly risen in the body, and were looking upon Him and doubting, He said to them, "Ye have not yet faith, see that it is I;" and He let them handle Him, and showed them the prints of the nails in His hands. And when they were by every kind of proof persuaded that it was Himself, and in the body, they asked Him to eat with them, that they might thus still more accurately ascertain that He had in verity risen bodily; and He did eat honey-comb and fish. **And when He had thus shown them that there is truly a resurrection of the flesh, wishing to show them this also, that it is not impossible for flesh to ascend into heaven (as He had said that our dwelling-place is in heaven), "He was taken up into heaven while they beheld," as He was in the flesh.** (Justin, *On the Resurrection*, Chapter IX)

Justin made the point that Christ's ascension to Heaven in His resurrected flesh proves that it is possible for flesh to ascend into Heaven, and he affirmed that "*our dwelling-place is in heaven.*" Compare this passage in Justin to the following crucial passage in Irenaeus.

"1. Since, again, some who are reckoned among the orthodox go beyond the pre-arranged plan for the exaltation of the just, and are ignorant of the methods by which they are disciplined beforehand for incorruption, they thus entertain **heretical opinions. For the heretics, despising the handiwork of God, and not admitting the salvation of their flesh, while they also treat the promise of God contemptuously, and pass beyond God altogether in the sentiments they form, affirm that immediately upon their death they shall pass above the heavens** and the Demiurge, and go to the Mother (Achamoth) or to that Father whom they have feigned. Those persons, therefore, who disallow a resurrection affecting the whole man (universam reprobant resurrectionem), and as far as in them lies remove it from the midst [of the Christian scheme], how can they be wondered at, if again they know nothing as to the plan of the resurrection? For they do not choose to understand, that if these things are as they say, the Lord Himself, in whom they profess to believe, did not rise again upon the third day; but immediately upon His expiring on the cross, undoubtedly departed on high, leaving His body to the earth. But the case was, that **for three days He dwelt in the place where the dead were**, as the prophet says concerning Him: "And the Lord remembered His dead saints who slept formerly in the land of sepulture; and He descended to them, to rescue and save them." And the Lord Himself says, "As Jonas remained three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth." Then also the apostle says, "But when He ascended, what is it but that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth?" This, too, David says when prophesying of Him, "And thou hast delivered my soul from the nethermost hell;" **and on His rising again the third day**, He said to Mary, who was the first to see and to

worship Him, "Touch Me not, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to the disciples, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and unto your Father."

2. If, then, **the Lord observed the law of the dead, that He might become the first-begotten from the dead, and tarried until the third day** "in the lower parts of the earth;" **then afterwards rising in the flesh**, so that He even showed the print of the nails to His disciples, **He thus ascended to the Father**;—[if all these things occurred, I say], how must these men not be put to confusion, who allege that "the lower parts" refer to this world of ours, but that their inner man, leaving the body here, ascends into the super-celestial place? For as the Lord "went away in the midst of the shadow of death," where the souls of the dead were, yet afterwards arose in the body, and after the resurrection was taken up [into heaven], it is manifest that **the souls of His disciples also**, upon whose account the Lord underwent these things, **shall go away into the invisible place** allotted to them by God, **and there remain until the resurrection**, awaiting that event; **then receiving their bodies, and rising in their entirety, that is bodily, just as the Lord arose, they shall come thus into the presence of God**. "For no disciple is above the Master, but every one that is perfect shall be as his Master." As our Master, therefore, did not at once depart, taking flight [to heaven], but awaited the time of His resurrection prescribed by the Father, which had been also shown forth through Jonas, and rising again after three days was taken up [to heaven]; **so ought we also to await the time of our resurrection prescribed by God and foretold by the prophets, and so, rising, be taken up, as many as the Lord shall account worthy of this [privilege]**. (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book V Chapter 31)

Note that Irenaeus believed that souls (including the soul of Jesus and the souls of His disciples) go to an intermediate place awaiting the resurrection. Irenaeus understood this to be a real place in the "*lower parts of the earth*." The last sentence indicates that he believed some (but not all) of the righteous, the most worthy ones, would be counted worthy to ascend into heaven just as Christ has done. Again, he perceives this as a real place since Christ is there now in the flesh. Note also that what Irenaeus considered heresy was not the very concept of ascending into Heaven, but rather the idea that disembodied souls go there immediately at death.

These passages demonstrate that both Justin and Irenaeus believed that the righteous are able to ascend into Heaven in their resurrected flesh. Specifically, Irenaeus believed that the eternal destiny of all of the redeemed after the end of the kingdom would be in one of three places and based on each one's fruitfulness. These three places, in descending order are, (1) Heaven, (2) Paradise, and (3) the New Jerusalem.

In the Septuagint, the word for the Garden of Eden is "*Paradise*." Irenaeus used the term "Paradise" to refer to the Garden of Eden, but he also believed that Paradise has

been removed from the world and is now the abode of saints such as Enoch and Elijah who have been translated and are now living there in the flesh, waiting for the consummation. Thus, it is a real, physical place. He wrote,

Where, then, was the first man placed? In paradise certainly, as the Scripture declares “And God planted a garden [*paradisum*] eastward in Eden, and there He placed the man whom He had formed.” And then afterwards when [man] proved disobedient, he was cast out thence into this world. Wherefore also the elders who were disciples of the apostles tell us that those who were translated were transferred to that place (for paradise has been prepared for righteous men, such as have the Spirit; in which place also Paul the apostle, when he was caught up, heard words which are unspeakable as regards us in our present condition), and that **there shall they who have been translated remain until the consummation** [of all things], as a prelude to immortality. Against Heresies, Book V, Chapter 5

Regarding Jerusalem, Irenaeus believed that the present city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt and restored as the capital of Christ’s kingdom during the Millennium. But after the Millennium, he envisioned New Jerusalem as a heavenly city that will descend on the New Earth and will replace the present City of Jerusalem which had been rebuilt during the kingdom. The Jerusalem of the millennial kingdom thus becomes “*the former Jerusalem*.” In the following quotation, note the distinction Irenaeus makes regarding the times of the kingdom and the time after the kingdom. He makes it clear that the New Heavens and New Earth follow the times of the kingdom.

But in the times of the kingdom, the earth has been called again by Christ [to its pristine condition], and Jerusalem rebuilt after the pattern of the Jerusalem above, of which the prophet Isaiah says, “Behold, I have depicted thy walls upon my hands, and thou art always in my sight.” And the apostle, too, writing to the Galatians, says in like manner, “But the Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.” He does not say this with any thought of an erratic Æon, or of any other power which departed from the Pleroma, or of Prunicus, but of the Jerusalem which has been delineated on [God’s] hands. And in the Apocalypse John saw this new [Jerusalem] descending upon the new earth. **For after the times of the kingdom**, he says, “I saw a great white throne, and Him who sat upon it, from whose face the earth fled away, and the heavens; and there was no more place for them.” And after this, he says, “I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and earth have passed away; also there was no more sea. And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband...” Isaiah also declares the very same: “For there shall be a new heaven and a new earth...” Now this is what has been said by the apostle: “For the fashion of this world passeth away.” To the same purpose did the Lord also declare, “Heaven and earth shall pass away.” When these things, therefore, pass away above the earth, John, the Lord’s disciple, says that the

New Jerusalem above shall [then] descend, as a bride adorned for her husband; and that this is the tabernacle of God, in which God will dwell with men. **Of this Jerusalem the former one is an image—that Jerusalem of the former earth** in which the righteous are disciplined beforehand for incorruption and prepared for salvation. *Against Heresies*, Book V, Chapter 35

As Irenaeus goes on to teach in Chapter 36, after the kingdom has ended, the eternal state will endure forever. But before giving the rest of Irenaeus' explanation, this brings us to the third quotation from Irenaeus that Tim supplies. Tim writes,

"So great a cloud of witnesses" have testified to the eschatology handed down by the Apostles of Jesus Christ. Many were pastors entrusted with the early churches; many were martyrs who sealed their testimony with their own blood. They all believed and taught the same eschatology – chiliasm.

The question that begs to be asked is, why? Where did chiliasm originate? The proverbial elephant in the room is that chiliasm was taught by the Apostles, just as Irenaeus indicated, *"the presbyters, the disciples of the Apostles"* repeated what they had heard from the Apostles [footnote: Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book. V, Chapter 36]. Chiliasm was and is a part of *"the Faith once for all delivered to the saints."* (71)

This excerpt gives an extremely false impression of what Irenaeus wrote. Irenaeus never claimed that the presbyters got the Millennial Week from the Apostles. And in fact, the specific thing that Irenaeus was referring to in this passage is that very feature of chiliasm that Tim rejects, namely, the heavenly destiny of the faithful in the eternal state **after the times of the kingdom**. Here is Irenaeus' quotation in context.

And therefore this [present] fashion has been formed temporary, God foreknowing all things; as I have pointed out in the preceding book, and have also shown, as far as was possible, the cause of the creation of this world of temporal things. But when this [present] fashion [of things] passes away, and man has been renewed, and flourishes in an incorruptible state, so as to preclude the possibility of becoming old, [then] there shall be the new heaven and the new earth, in which the new man shall remain [continually], always holding fresh converse with God. And since (or, that) these things shall ever continue without end, Isaiah declares, "For as the new heavens and the new earth which I do make, continue in my sight, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain." **And as the presbyters say, Then those who are deemed worthy of an abode in heaven shall go there, others shall enjoy the delights of paradise, and others shall possess the splendour of the city;** for everywhere the Saviour shall be seen according as they who see Him shall be worthy. [They say, moreover], that there is this distinction between the habitation of those who produce an hundred-fold, and that of those who produce sixty-fold, and that of those who produce thirty-fold: **for the first will be taken up into the**

heavens, the second will dwell in paradise, the last will inhabit the city; and that was on this account the Lord declared, *"In My Father's house are many mansions."* For all things belong to God, **who supplies all with a suitable dwelling-place**; even as His Word says, that a share is allotted to all by the Father, according as each person is or shall be worthy. And this is the couch on which the guests shall recline, having been invited to the wedding. **The presbyters, the disciples of the apostles**, affirm that this is the gradation and arrangement of those who are saved, and that they advance through steps of this nature; also that they ascend through the Spirit to the Son, and through the Son to the Father, and that in due time the Son will yield up His work to the Father, even as it is said by the apostle, *"For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."* (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book V, Chapter 36)

The specific teaching that Irenaeus was referring to is that after the kingdom has ended, after the seventh millennium, the most fruitful disciples will dwell in Heaven, the less fruitful will dwell in Paradise, and the least fruitful will dwell in the Holy City which will have come down to the New Earth. For this teaching, Irenaeus cited as his authority *"the Presbyters"* rather than the Apostles and he added that these presbyters were *"disciples of the apostles."*

Irenaeus did not claim that the Presbyters got this teaching directly from the apostles. That could be inferred from his calling them *"disciples of the apostles,"* and Tim does infer this. But it is far more likely that this was Irenaeus' way of elevating these men and their wisdom and insight. But if Tim is correct that this expression means Irenaeus was citing an oral tradition that came directly from the apostles, then it must apply to the specific point Irenaeus was making in the context. And if that is the case, then why does Tim not teach that the kingdom will end and after it does the most fruitful disciples will dwell in Heaven?

The reason this point is so important is that it was **chiliasm** that opened the door to this corruption. If the kingdom is the 7th millennium, then it logically follows that the kingdom has a finite duration of 1,000 years and so there must be something new beginning on the 8th day. Barnabas, the original chiliast, explicitly wrote about this 8th day without elaborating on it. Once this point was introduced **via chiliasm** into Christian thought, it began to evolve. Irenaeus' teaching about the three dwelling places subsequent to the kingdom was an early stage of this evolution. I promise you, dear reader, that you will be shocked by what later chiliasts did with this point. "Heavenly destiny" meant one thing to Justin and Irenaeus. It will mean something entirely different to later chiliasts.

In any event, this point is indeed *"inseparable"* from chiliasm and came from chiliasm, but it is NOT part of *"the Faith once for all delivered to the saints."* What Irenaeus did

was to blend chiliasm with the earlier, primitive, pristine eschatology. Chiliasm is thus a corruption of the pristine faith.

This brings up an important point. However highly we may regard the ECFs – and I regard them very highly – they were subject to error and therefore, they cannot be the source or the authority for ANY truth. **The importance of this point cannot be exaggerated.**

Mathetes (Author and Place unknown, 150-225): The *Epistle to Diognetus* written by “Mathetes”¹²⁰ is dated by Schaff as approximately 130 A.D. but considerable doubt and conjecture exists regarding the date. It has been variously dated as early as 117 and as late as 313. Lightfoot dates it between 150-225, and I am placing it towards the earlier part of Lightfoot’s range for the purposes of this ordering. The epistle is an evangelistic appeal to his friend Diognetus attempting to persuade him to become a Christian. Mathetes refers to the Second Coming of Christ and punishments and rewards but there is no reference to the Millennial Week or the Millennial Sabbath. Consequently, Mathetes cannot be counted as a chiliast. On the other hand, Mathetes does echo the hatred of all things Jewish first spoken by Barnabas’. This attitude became pervasive after Barnabas.

Summary of the Second Century after Barnabas: Eight authors were included in the time period of the second century after Barnabas. One thing these fathers held in common was a belief in the continued operation of the gift of prophecy in the church in their day. Justin and Irenaeus stated this explicitly. This no doubt made them receptive to Barnabas’ prophecy. Prior to Barnabas, there was only one, primitive doctrine of eschatology. With Barnabas, this simplicity and unanimity were fractured and three new systems emerged. These were chiliasm, historic premillennialism, and amillennialism.

In addition to Barnabas, and based strictly on their own writings, we can count only **one** true chiliast: Irenaeus. None of the other writers of the last half of the second century ever mentioned it in spite of the fact that we have extensive discussions of eschatology, the resurrection, the return of Christ and His reign in Jerusalem, the creation week, and even chronology. Irenaeus DID embrace chiliasm, and his writings give strong indications that the source of his chiliasm was in fact Barnabas. Irenaeus expanded on that part of Barnabas’ prophecy which had been left undeveloped – *the eternal state*.

Justin was certainly aware of Barnabas’ chiliasm and appears to have been influenced by it, but there is no evidence in any of his surviving writings that he specifically taught the Millennial Week. If he had believed it, it seems inconceivable that he failed to mention it in his *Dialog with Trypho*. Justin’s eschatology appears to be identical to what we know today as “historic premillennialism.” The third new eschatological system

¹²⁰ “Mathetes” means “disciple” in Greek. This is likely not his actual name but rather his chosen pseudonym.

What we observe from the writings of the second century is that the majority opinion continued to be a commitment to the primitive eschatology. Three new doctrines developed in this century gradually influencing the church and all three of them can be traced to Barnabas. The first was chiliasm, planted by Barnabas as a prophetic utterance and taking root in Irenaeus. Barnabas was influenced in his opinions by Jewish speculations and fables. The second new doctrine was historic premillennialism which was a corruption of the primitive eschatology with some aspects of Barnabas' prophecy. The third new doctrine was amillennialism interpreting all of the prophecies of the kingdom as having been fulfilled in the church and denying any earthly reign of Christ following His second advent. This too can be ascribed to Barnabas and took root in Clement of Alexandria. Clement was strongly influenced in this direction by a desire to harmonize Christian truth with Greek philosophy.

§D5: The Third Century witnesses the continued development of chiliasm, historic premillennialism, and amillennialism.

During the third century, the three new systems of eschatology continued to evolve and develop in detail and sophistication. The primitive eschatology was being displaced. Amillennialism became dominant in no small measure due to the influence of the Alexandrian school.

***Tertullian (Carthage, 190-220):** Tertullian became a Christian in 185 A.D. and became a presbyter in 190. He died in either 220 or 240. His writings bridge the turn of the century making him the last of the second and first of the third century writers. He is also the most prolific of all the Ante-Nicene fathers with his treatises filling an entire one and a half volumes of the ten-volume series. He wrote on every conceivable area of doctrine and practice (including eschatology) in at least 36 apologetical, polemical, exegetical, and ethical works. Toward the end of his life he joined the Montanist movement.

Tertullian is one of the twelve whom Tim identifies by name as being chiliasts, however, Tim does not offer any evidence in support of this claim, nor was I able to find any. Tertullian's writings suggest rather that he was a historic premillennialist like Justin. Despite the wealth of writings we have from him, there is no trace of the Millennial Week. In contradiction to the Millennial Week, Tertullian wrote the following.

Accordingly, God's judgment will be more full and complete, because it will be pronounced at the very last, in an eternal irrevocable sentence, both of punishment and of consolation, (on men whose) souls are not to transmigrate into beasts, but are to return into their own proper bodies. And all this once for all, and on "that day, too, of which the Father only knoweth;" (only knoweth,) in order that by her trembling expectation faith may make full trial of her anxious sincerity, keeping her gaze ever fixed on that day, in her perpetual ignorance of

it, daily fearing that for which she yet daily hopes. Tertullian, *A Treatise On the Soul*, Chapter XXXIII

Observe that Tertullian asserts that only the Father knows when that day will come. The church is perpetually ignorant of it, yet daily hoping for it. In Tertullian's view, this is "*her trembling expectation*." This is a beautiful expression of the church's hope, but it is incompatible with chiliasm. Tim inclusion of Tertullian in the list of chiliasts seems to be by means of the "conflation" I described in §C3.

That Tertullian never mentioned the Millennial Week is especially striking considering the context of several passages where one would naturally expect the Millennial Week to be stated if he had believed it. For example, Tertullian wrote the following passage regarding the Sabbath. This is exactly the type of context in which Barnabas or Irenaeus would invariably have transitioned to the Millennial Week, and since we are familiar with those passages in Barnabas and Irenaeus, it seems that this is what Tertullian must be introducing. But just at the point where we expect it, he gives no hint of chiliasm.

For the Jews say, that from the beginning God sanctified the seventh day, by resting on it from all His works which He made; and that thence it was, likewise, that Moses said to the People: "REMEMBER the day of the sabbaths, to sanctify it: every servile work ye shall not do therein, except what pertaineth unto life." Whence we (Christians) understand that we still more ought to observe a sabbath from all "servile work" always, and not only every seventh day, but through all time. And through this arises the question for us, *what* sabbath God willed us to keep? For the Scriptures point to a sabbath eternal and a sabbath temporal. For Isaiah the prophet says, "*Your sabbaths my soul hateth*;" and in another place he says, "*My sabbaths ye have profaned*." Whence we discern that the temporal sabbath is human, and the eternal sabbath is accounted divine; concerning which He predicts through Isaiah: "And there shall be," He says, "month after month, and day after day, and sabbath after sabbath; and all flesh shall come to adore in Jerusalem, saith the Lord;" which we understand to have been fulfilled in the times of Christ, when "all flesh"—that is, every nation—"came to adore in Jerusalem" God the Father, through Jesus Christ His Son, as was predicted through the prophet: "Behold, proselytes through me shall go unto Thee." Thus, therefore, before this temporal sabbath, there was withal an eternal sabbath foreshown and foretold; just as before the carnal circumcision there was withal a spiritual circumcision foreshown. In short, let them teach us, as we have already premised, that Adam observed the sabbath; or that Abel, when offering to God a holy victim, pleased Him by a religious reverence for the sabbath; or that Enoch, when translated, had been a keeper of the sabbath; or that Noah the ark-builder observed, on account of the deluge, an immense sabbath; or that Abraham, in observance of the sabbath, offered Isaac his son; or that Melchizedek in his priesthood received the law of the sabbath... Whence it is manifest that the force of such precepts was temporary, and respected the

necessity of present circumstances; and that it was not with a view to its observance in perpetuity that God formerly gave them such a law. Tertullian, *An Answer to the Jews*, Chapter 7

Numerous additional passages could be produced. The bottom line is that there is no evidence that Tertullian was a chiliast.

Minucius Felix (Rome, 205): This writer was a contemporary of Tertullian. We have only one work authored by him, the **Octavius of Minucius Felix**. There is some debate regarding the date of this work relative to those of Tertullian. In any case, Schaff concludes that it must be dated “not before 205 A.D.” The genre of the book is a debate or dispute between Octavius (a Christian) and Caecilius (a pagan) in which Minucius Felix is the arbitrator. The work has the character of both an apologetic and an evangelistic work. Octavius ably defends the Christian hope in the resurrection. There is no trace of the Millennial Week.

Caius (Rome, after 200): Caius wrote “near the beginning of the third century.” Only fragments of Caius’ works have survived – primarily in Eusebius – the most significant of which is the Muratorian Canon. There is also a fragment in Eusebius according to whom Caius held a disputation against one Proclus. In the course of this disputation, Eusebius quotes Caius as saying that Cerinthus was the originator of the doctrine of an earthly reign of Christ in these words,

But Cerinthus also, by means of revelations which he pretends were written by a great apostle, brings before us marvelous things which he falsely claims were shown him by angels; and he says that after the resurrection the kingdom of Christ will be set up on earth, and that the flesh dwelling in Jerusalem will again be subject to desires and pleasures. And being an enemy of the Scriptures of God, he asserts, with the purpose of deceiving men, that there is to be a period of a thousand years for marriage festivals. Caius, quoted by Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book III, Chapter 28

This hostility to an earthly reign of Christ also resulted in considerable controversy respecting John’s *Revelation of Jesus Christ*. Some even claimed that Cerinthus wrote the Revelation and falsely attributed it to John. Eusebius writes that this was the opinion of Dionysius. Eusebius continues,

And Dionysius, who was bishop of the parish of Alexandria in our day, in the second book of his work *On the Promises*, where he says some things concerning the Apocalypse of John which he draws from tradition, mentions this same man in the following words: “But (they say that) Cerinthus, who founded the sect which was called, after him, the Cerinthian, desiring reputable authority for his fiction, prefixed the name. For the doctrine which he taught was this: that the kingdom of Christ will be an earthly one.”

On this basis, we can identify Caius as amillennial.

***Hippolytus (Rome, 222-239, Martyred 239):** Hippolytus was a disciple of Irenaeus and this is reflected in his interpretations and in his style and manner of writing. If imitation is the highest form of praise, then Hippolytus praised his teacher profoundly. Hippolytus wrote a ten-volume work, *The Refutation of All Heresies*, which is essentially an expansion of Irenaeus' earlier work. He also wrote extensive exegetical, dogmatic, historical, and apologetic works, most of which survive only in fragments. After Barnabas and Irenaeus, Hippolytus is the third true chiliast. Tim quotes the following passage as evidence of Hippolytus' chiliasm.

And 6,000 years must needs be accomplished, in order that the Sabbath may come, the rest, the holy day "on which God rested from all His works." For the Sabbath is the type and emblem of the future kingdom of the saints, when they "shall reign with Christ," when He comes from heaven, as John says in his Apocalypse: for "a day with the Lord is as a thousand years." Since, then, in six days God made all things, it follows that 6,000 years must be fulfilled. Hippolytus, Fragment from a *Commentary on Daniel*, Chapter 4.¹²¹

It is natural to expect the disciple of Irenaeus to agree with his teacher, and this quotation proves that he does. However, there is more to be learned when this passage is placed in its original context. Hippolytus is writing a commentary on the visions in the Book of Daniel. Overall the commentary is brilliant and in no way inferior to any other commentary on Daniel, ancient or modern. But in the middle of this commentary, he begins a discussion on the timing of when all these events have been or will be fulfilled. It is at this point that he introduces the Millennial Week and includes a lengthy, detailed defense and explanation of the doctrine. Here is the entire context.

But that we may not leave our subject at this point undemonstrated, we are obliged to discuss the matter of the times, of which a man should not speak hastily, because they are a light to him. For as the times are noted from the foundation of the world, and reckoned from Adam, they set clearly before us the matter with which our inquiry deals. For the first appearance of our Lord in the flesh took place in Bethlehem, under Augustus, in the year 5500; and He suffered in the thirty-third year. And 6,000 years must needs be accomplished, in order that the Sabbath may come, the rest, the holy day "on which God rested from all His works." For the Sabbath is the type and emblem of the future kingdom of the saints, when they "shall reign with Christ," when He comes from heaven, as John says in his Apocalypse: for "a day with the Lord is as a thousand years." Since, then, in six days God made all things, it follows that

¹²¹ Tim mistakenly cites the *Hexaemeron* (Six Days Work) as the source of this passage, but the correct source is Hippolytus' commentary (fragment) on the Book of Daniel.

6,000 years must be fulfilled. And they are not yet fulfilled, as John says: "five are fallen; one is," that is, the sixth; "the other is not yet come."

In mentioning the "other," moreover, he specifies the seventh, in which there is rest. But some one may be ready to say, How will you prove to me that the Saviour was born in the year 5500? Learn that easily, O man; for the things that took place of old in the wilderness, under Moses, in the case of the tabernacle, were constituted types and emblems of spiritual mysteries, in order that, when the truth came in Christ in these last days, you might be able to perceive that these things were fulfilled. For He says to him, "And thou shalt make the ark of imperishable wood, and shalt overlay it with pure gold within and without; and thou shalt make the length of it two cubits and a half, and the breadth thereof one cubit and a half, and a cubit and a half the height;" which measures, when summed up together, make five cubits and a half, so that the 5500 years might be signified thereby.

At that time, then, the Saviour appeared and showed His own body to the world, (born) of the Virgin, who was the "ark overlaid with pure gold," with the Word within and the Holy Spirit without; so that the truth is demonstrated, and the "ark" made manifest. From the birth of Christ, then, we must reckon the 500 years that remain to make up the 6000, and thus the end shall be. And that the Saviour appeared in the world, bearing the imperishable ark, His own body, at a time which was the fifth and half, John declares: "Now it was the sixth hour," he says, intimating by that, one-half of the day. But a day with the Lord is 1000 years; and the half of that, therefore, is 500 years. For it was not meet that He should appear earlier, for the burden of the law still endured, nor yet when the sixth day was fulfilled (for the baptism is changed), but on the fifth and half, in order that in the remaining half time the gospel might be preached to the whole world, and that when the sixth day was completed He might end the present life.

Since, then, the Persians held the mastery for 330 years, and after them the Greeks, who were yet more glorious, held it for 300 years, of necessity the fourth beast, as being strong and mightier than all that were before it, will reign 500 years. When the times are fulfilled, and the ten horns spring from the beast in the last (times), then Antichrist will appear among them. When he makes war against the saints, and persecutes them, then may we expect the manifestation of the Lord from heaven.

That is Hippolytus' explanation and defense of the Millennial Week. Now almost halfway through the third century, there have been only three chiliasts whom we can verify through their own writings. Barnabas claimed to receive it by direct revelation. Irenaeus

and his disciple Hippolytus attempted to defend the Millennial Week by arguments from Scripture, but the arguments they all three use are absurdly allegorical and illogical.¹²²

Origin (Alexandria, 230-254, Martyred¹²³ 254): No one would ever mistake Origin, the “father of allegory,” for a chiliast nor a premillennialist. He continued in the tradition of Clement of Alexandria inventing outlandish fables which were essentially mystical ideas dressed in Christian jargon.

Asterius Urbanus (Place unknown, possibly Galatia or Rome, 232): Asterius Urbanus’ is believed to be the author of a treatise against the Montanus sect. Only small fragments of the treatise have survived. Very little is known about him. There is no indication of his eschatology.

***Commodianus (North Africa, 240):** Little is known about Commodianus. It is likely that he was a bishop in North Africa. His style of writing is poetry. Two of his works are known, but only the first, *Instructions of Commodianus*, is found in Schaff. The second is named, *Carmen Apologeticum*. *Instructions* is a series of 80 acrostic poems. The last one ends with the following line:

I cannot comprehend all things in a little treatise; the curiosity of the learned men
shall find my name in this.

And in fact, when the first letters of the lines of the 80th poem are arranged in reverse order, they spell the author’s name: *Commodianus Mendicus Christi*.

Both works declare, without any explanation, that the world will end after 6,000 years. No connection is made to the creation week of six days nor to the Millennial Sabbath. There is not even any allusion to one day being as a thousand years. He simply states as a matter of fact that this world will come to an end after 6,000 years and after that there will be a millennium. Regarding this final millennium, there is no connection made to the covenant with Abraham nor to any land inheritance. There is a reference to the city (unnamed) coming down out of heaven. With these facts, we must acknowledge that Commodianus was a “chiliast,” but only in the barest sense that he believed the present age will end after 6,000 years.

However, to fully evaluate Commodianus’ contribution to eschatology, one must also recognize that he collected many fanciful ideas which he adduced in his eschatology. One example will suffice.

¹²² Tim attributes the mistakes the early chiliasts made to their use of the LXX. But that hardly accounts for Hippolytus’ embarrassing explanation.

¹²³ Origin was imprisoned and tortured for his faith. He endured and survived the imprisonment and died shortly thereafter due to his weakened condition.

Commodianus believed that the people whom we know as the Jews comprise merely half of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. There is another half who are currently being hidden somewhere beyond Persia where they are living in perfect health and in obedience to the Law of Moses. These people will form Christ's army when He returns to destroy Nero who has been resurrected to become the Antichrist. Here is an excerpt.

Then the almighty God, in order to end all the things which I have described, will lead forth a populace that had been hidden for a long time. They had been Jews, hidden on the further side of the Persian River [Euphrates], whom God had wished to tarry there until the end. Captivity had compelled them there, who were fully half of the twelve tribes.¹²⁴ There is no dishonesty amongst them, nor any hatred. The child does not die before the parents; there is no bewailing over the dead, nor any mourning, as there customarily is amongst us. There they await the life to come. They eat no animal flesh, but only vegetables, since to eat as much involves no shedding of blood. They exist with their bodies intact, the course of their lives dictated by justice. Impious powers are not engendered in them, nor do illnesses of any kind ever draw near to them. For they are sincerely obedient to the law which we also follow in order to live in purity. Only death and toil can be found amongst them, but other afflictions are absent... This people who now live beyond the borders [i.e., of the Roman Empire] shall be the people that go forth. When the river has dried up, they will once more seek the land of Judea. And when the Lord comes to fulfill His promises to them, they will exult in His presence throughout their journey. All of the lands will become fertile before them, all things will rejoice; the beasts themselves will be glad to receive the saints; springs will well up in every place as if of their own volition. The people of the Most High go forth in fear of the Lord. The clouds shall make shade for them, lest they be harassed by the sun. And should they become fatigued, the mountains will prostrate themselves before them. An angel of Him Who is on high shall be sent before them, who shall preside over their peaceful army in its passage. With no effort shall they go forward with light steps, and they shall lay waste to all whom they cross, just like passing lions. No nation will be able to resist them if they should wage war against them - for God shall be with them. They will cast out the peoples, and overthrow their cities. By the permission of God they will deprive all of the colonies of their gold and silver, that they might grow rich by such depredations. And thus they shall chant hymns to their upright God along the way. Commodianus, *Carmen Apologeticum*

This and many other novelties collected or invented by Commodianus are part of his eschatology.

¹²⁴ In *The Instructions*, Commodianus makes this number 9 ½ of the tribes who are presently being hidden.

Julius Africanus (Emmaus 240): After Theophilus of Antioch, Julius Africanus is the second great historian and chronologist of the church. He wrote in conclusion to his chronology,

The period, then, to the advent of the Lord from Adam and the creation is 5531 years, from which epoch to the 250th Olympiad there are 192 years, as has been shown above.

He was a firm believer in the resurrection. It can also be inferred from the following fragment, preserved by Eusebius, that he believed in the fulfillment of the promises to the patriarchs after the resurrection.

For whereas in Israel the names of their generations were enumerated either according to nature or according to law,—according to nature, indeed, by the succession of legitimate offspring, and according to law whenever another raised up children to the name of a brother dying childless; for because no clear hope of resurrection was yet given them, they had a representation of the future promise in a kind of mortal resurrection, with the view of perpetuating the name of one deceased.

In other words, he is theorizing that since in the progress of revelation, the Israelites had not yet been given an explicit promise of the resurrection, they may have presumed that the promise of the inheritance would be fulfilled merely by one's progeny. This strongly suggests Julius believed in the literal fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise of land inheritance by means of the resurrection. Julius also wrote an exegetical treatise on the 70 weeks of Daniel, but unfortunately only a fragment remains. Despite his learning and zeal for historical accuracy and chronology, his belief in the resurrection and the fulfillment of the promises, there is no evidence in any of his writings that he believed in the Millennial Week nor is there any evidence that he believed the inheritance would be temporary. Consequently, he most likely held to the primitive eschatology. There is no evidence he was a chiliast.

Gregory Thaumaturgus (Alexandria 240-270): Gregory is the successor of the Alexandrian school after Clement and Origin. He wrote on many topics, but he never mentioned the resurrection, the return of Christ, or any view of the Kingdom. Nevertheless, as the head of the Alexandrian school, it is reasonable to assume that he held the amillennial teachings of that school.

Dionysius of Alexandria (Alexandria 247-265): Dionysius the Great¹²⁵ was bishop of Alexandria. More than once he was imprisoned and suffered for the faith. He was exiled for two or three years before being allowed to return to Alexandria by the Edict of Gallienus. He did not believe in an earthly reign of Christ and argued against it

¹²⁵ Dionysius "the Great," so called by Eusebius.

strenuously, but graciously. Faced with the plain statements of the Book of Revelation, especially Chapter 20, many of his companions who shared his opinion openly rejected and denounced the Revelation as a heretical book. Eusebius made statements (previous quoted) which almost appear to attribute this opinion to Dionysius. It is more accurate to say that Dionysius advanced the theory that the Revelation should not be rejected completely. He thought some “holy and inspired man” named John must have written the book and that it contained something profound but he could not decipher it and decided that it could not have been written by the Apostle John. This led to continued debates whether the Revelation was canonical. Dionysius wrote,

Yet, having formed an idea of it as a composition exceeding my capacity of understanding, I regard it as containing a kind of hidden and wonderful intelligence on the several subjects which come under it. For though I cannot comprehend it, I still suspect that there is some deeper sense underlying the words. And I do not measure and judge its expressions by the standard of my own reason, but, making more allowance for faith, I have simply regarded them as too lofty for my comprehension; and I do not forthwith reject what I do not understand, but I am only the more filled with wonder at it, in that I have not been able to discern its import... That this person was called John, therefore, and that this was the writing of a John, I do not deny. And I admit further, that it was also the work of some holy and inspired man. But I could not so easily admit that this was the apostle, the son of Zebedee, the brother of James, and the same person with him who wrote the Gospel which bears the title *according to John*, and the catholic epistle. But from the character of both, and the forms of expression, and the whole disposition and execution of the book, I draw the conclusion that the authorship is not his. Dionysius, Fragment from the *Two Books on the Promises*

***Cyprian (Carthage, 248-258, Martyred 258):** A bishop of Carthage, Cyprian had been a disciple of Tertullian. He was a prolific author, writing 82 epistles, 12 treatises, and three books. His writings fill up approximately half of one of the ten volumes in Schaff. Cyprian is one of the twelve writers whom Tim identifies by name as a chiliast. The only evidence Tim provides for this is the quotation on Page 68, where Cyprian wrote,

It is an ancient adversary and an old enemy with whom we wage our battle: six thousand years are now nearly completed since the devil first attacked man.
Cyprian, Treatise XI, *Exhortation to Martyrdom*

This quotation by itself does not necessarily establish that Cyprian was a chiliast; it could indicate merely that he was well acquainted with the accepted chronology of the day. Regarding this quotation, Tim places a footnote to it that reads,

A few writers spoke of the 6,000 years as being nearly complete in their day. These writers thought that the Antichrist was about to appear, after which Christ would return. (Other writers, such as Irenaeus and Hippolytus [sic] expected a

considerable delay before Antichrist would appear). The error was based on their use of the Septuagint's erroneous ages of the patriarchs in the Genesis genealogies. (68 footnote)

Cyprian's statement that "six thousand years are now nearly completed," which Tim says contradicts Irenaeus and Hippolytus and is in "error," has nothing to do with the LXX. All of the fathers used the LXX exclusively. According to the chronology of Hippolytus, Christ was born in the year 5500, which would imply Cyprian was writing in approximately the year 5758. According to the chronology of Theophilus of Antioch, there had been 5,698 years from Adam to the death of Emperor Verus, which would mean Cyprian would have been writing in approximately the year 5788. And according to the chronology of Julius Africanus, Christ was born in the year 5531, which would mean Cyprian was writing in the year 5789. These calculations differ from each other by at most 31 years and are all based on the data in the LXX with the differences being accounted for by reason of individual interpretations of specific passages. From Cyprian's perspective, they all place the completion of 6,000 years a little over 200 years in the future and in his estimation that implies "*six thousand years are now nearly completed.*"

In a different work responding to the pagan Demetrianus who accused the Christians of causing wars, famines, and pestilences in the world by failing to worship the gods of the Romans, Cyprian countered that these plagues are the natural result of "*the old age and decline of the world.*" He used the analogy of the decline of health that comes to all old persons and asked Demetrianus if he would accuse the Christians of causing that as well.

In the preface to *Exhortation to Martyrdom*, Cyprian also wrote,

You have desired, beloved Fortunatus that, since the burden of persecutions and afflictions is lying heavy upon us, and in the ending and completion of the world the hateful time of Antichrist is already beginning to draw near, I would collect from the sacred Scriptures some exhortations for preparing and strengthening the minds of the brethren, whereby I might animate the soldiers of Christ for the heavenly and spiritual contest.

Cyprian believed in perpetual watchfulness for the coming of the Lord and therefore, it was never too early to "prepare" and "strengthen" the brethren in the face of the sufferings that would have to be endured during the Tribulation. He wrote,

Let us, beloved brethren, arouse ourselves as much as we can; and breaking the slumber of our ancient listlessness, let us be watchful to observe and to do the Lord's precepts. Let us be such as He Himself has bidden us to be, saying, "Let your loins be girt, and your lamps burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when He shall come from the wedding, that when He cometh

and knocketh, they may open to Him. Blessed are those servants whom their Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching.” We ought to be girt about, lest, when the day of setting forth comes, it should find us burdened and entangled. Let our light shine in good works, and glow in such wise as to lead us from the night of this world to the daylight of eternal brightness. Let us always with solicitude and caution wait for the sudden coming of the Lord, that when He shall knock, our faith may be on the watch, and receive from the Lord the reward of our vigilance. If these commands be observed, if these warnings and precepts be kept, we cannot be overtaken in slumber by the deceit of the devil; but we shall reign with Christ in His kingdom as servants that watch. The Treatises of Cyprian, Treatise I, On the Unity of the Church, Chapter 27

Moreover, in the Gospel the Lord speaks, and says: “He that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved.” And again: “If ye shall abide in my word, ye shall be my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” Moreover, forewarning us that **we ought always to be ready**, and to stand firmly equipped and armed, He adds, and says: “Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord when he shall return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh they may open unto him. Blessed are those servants whom their lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Treatises of Cyprian, Treatise XI, *On the Exhortation to Martyrdom*, Chapter 8

In Cyprian’s day, persecution and martyrdom were the norm and he expected it to increase as the time of the Antichrist drew nearer. He believed that Christ commanded perpetual watchfulness; this can hardly be considered an “error.”

I wish to turn now to a quotation from Cyprian (which Tim does not quote) that appears to confirm that he was a chiliast. This is again from *Exhortation to Martyrdom*.

What, indeed, do we find in the Maccabees of seven brethren, equals alike in their lot of birth and virtues, filling up the number seven in the sacrament of a perfected completion? Seven brethren were thus associating in martyrdom. **As the first seven days in the divine arrangement containing seven thousand of years**, as the seven spirits and seven angels which stand and go in and out before the face of God, and the seven-branched lamp in the tabernacle of witness, and the seven golden candlesticks in the Apocalypse, and the seven columns in Solomon upon which Wisdom built her house; so here also the number seven of the brethren, embracing, in the quantity of their number, the seven churches, as likewise in the first book of Kings we read that the barren hath borne seven. And in Isaiah seven women lay hold on one man, whose name they ask to be called upon them. And the Apostle Paul, who refers to this lawful and certain number, writes to the seven churches. And in the Apocalypse the Lord directs His divine and heavenly precepts to the seven churches and their angels, which number is now found in this case, in the seven brethren, that

a lawful consummation may be completed. With the seven children is manifestly associated also the mother, their origin and root, who subsequently begat seven churches, she herself having been first, and alone founded upon a rock by the voice of the Lord. Exhortation to Martyrdom, Chapter 11

This is the only reference to the Millennial Week in Cyprian. It is striking that in all of his writings, Cyprian is a reliably careful expositor, continually quoting the Scriptures according to their literal sense and within their proper contexts. But like all of the chiliasts before him, when it comes to defending and explaining the six millennia and the millennial Sabbath, he resorts to pure allegory. In this case, every example of the number seven in Scripture contains a hidden meaning pointing to the millennial week.

This constitutes the bare minimum of chiliasm. Cyprian does not elaborate or expand on this statement. On the other hand, it is clear that the earthly kingdom of God is not Cyprian's hope. His hope is a "heavenly kingdom" and heavenly destiny to which he believed we all go immediately at death. Therefore, we should long for death the sooner the better. He wrote,

We should consider, dearly beloved brethren—we should ever and anon reflect that we have renounced the world, and are in the meantime living here as guests and strangers. Let us greet the day which assigns each of us to his own home, which snatches us hence, and sets us free from the snares of the world, and restores us to paradise and the kingdom. Who that has been placed in foreign lands would not hasten to return to his own country? Who that is hastening to return to his friends would not eagerly desire a prosperous gale, that he might the sooner embrace those dear to him? We regard paradise as our country—we already begin to consider the patriarchs as our parents: why do we not hasten and run, that we may behold our country, that we may greet our parents? There a great number of our dear ones is awaiting us, and a dense crowd of parents, brothers, children, is longing for us, already assured of their own safety, and still solicitous for our salvation. To attain to their presence and their embrace, what a gladness both for them and for us in common! What a pleasure is there in the heavenly kingdom, without fear of death; and how lofty and perpetual a happiness with eternity of living! There the glorious company of the apostles — there the host of the rejoicing prophets — there the innumerable multitude of martyrs, crowned for the victory of their struggle and passion — there the triumphant virgins, who subdued the lust of the flesh and of the body by the strength of their continency — there are merciful men rewarded, who by feeding and helping the poor have done the works of righteousness — who, keeping the Lord's precepts, have transferred their earthly patrimonies to the heavenly treasures. To these, beloved brethren, let us hasten with an eager desire; let us crave quickly to be with them, and quickly to come to Christ. May God behold this our eager desire; may the Lord Christ look upon this purpose of our mind and

faith, He who will give the larger rewards of His glory to those whose desires in respect of Himself were greater! Cyprian, *On the Mortality*, Chapter 26

The hope of going to heaven immediately at death is something that Justin and Irenaeus regarded as heresy. Tim has argued against it strongly, and I agree with him on that point. Tim writes,

The earliest Christians' hope was the one found throughout the Old Testament Scriptures and reiterated in the New Testament – the resurrection of the flesh and gathering to the permanent Land inheritance, the millennium of Christ's reign over the nations from Jerusalem. The prophets predicted that God would come to live among His people perpetually. Rather than expecting to fly away to heaven at the second coming, the early Christians expected to be caught up in the air to greet Christ at His coming, escort Him back to earth, and receive their inheritance on the restored Land. (41-42)

Whether or not Cyprian was mistaken on this subject is a discussion worth having, but that is not the point. What is clear is that Tim is mistaken on "the earliest Christians' hope."

Novatian (Rome, 250-257, Martyred 258): Only two of Novatian's works have survived, one on the *Trinity* and the other on *Jewish Meats*. The treatise *Concerning the Trinity* clearly affirms his belief in a literal resurrection.

And for this reason blood flowed forth from His hands and feet, and from His very side, so that He might be proved to be a sharer in our body by dying according to the laws of our dissolution. And that He was raised again in the same bodily substance in which He died, is proved by the wounds of that very body, and thus He showed the laws of our resurrection in His flesh, in that He restored the same body in His resurrection which He had from us. For a law of resurrection is established, in that Christ is raised up in the substance of the body as an example for the rest; because, when it is written that "flesh and blood do not inherit the kingdom of God," it is not the substance of the flesh that is condemned, which was built up by the divine hands that it should not perish, but only the guilt of the flesh is rightly rebuked, which by the voluntary daring of man rebelled against the claims of divine law. Because in baptism and in the dissolution of death the flesh is raised up and returns to salvation, by being recalled to the condition of innocency when the mortality of guilt is put away. Novatian, *Concerning the Trinity*, Chapter 10

This reference is insufficient to infer anything further. He was certainly not of the character of the Alexandrian fathers. There is nothing to indicate that he was a chiliast.

Novation led a schism against his fellow bishops, in particular against Cyprian, over the question of "clinic baptism." Novation was of the opinion that those who had denied

Christ when threatened with persecution, torture, and death, can never be received back into fellowship. Cyprian and others believed that restoration was possible. For this “heresy,” Novation was excommunicated.

Alexander of Cappadocia (Cappadocia, 250, Martyred 251): Only three short fragments survive of his writings and nothing in them touches upon the present survey. However, he does mention and speak highly of both Clement (of Alexandria?) and Origen. This may be sufficient grounds to infer that he is likely to have been like-minded with them.

Dionysius of Rome (Rome, 259-269): The only surviving fragment of his writings concerns the Trinity. There is nothing in it regarding eschatology.

Theognostus (Alexandria, 265): Theognostus was a member of the school of Alexandria and was a disciple of Origen. The three small fragments of his writings reflect this.

Malchion (Antioch, 270): Malchion was a presbyter of the church at Antioch, yet in the epistle we have from him, he appeals to Alexandria for assistance in dealing with a “heretic” by the name of Paul of Samosata. Nothing in the epistle touches on the subject, but the fact that this presbyter in Antioch appeals to the school at Alexandria for doctrinal assistance tells us much about the expanding influence of the Alexandrian school. Given his ties to the Alexandrian school, he should probably be classified as amillennial.

Anatolius (Alexandria, 270): Anatolius wrote a lengthy treatise on his proposed method for determining the correct day on which to celebrate Easter (Passover). He also wrote a treatise on mathematics. He was of the Alexandrian school which means he was probably amillennial, but nothing he wrote directly concerns eschatology.

Archelaus (Mesopotamia? 277): The writing entitled, *The Acts of the Disputation with the Heresiarch Manes*, is an account of a debate between the bishop Archelaus and Manes, the founder of the Manichean sect which taught a form of Gnosticism. It is very worthwhile reading, but since it does not bear on the topic at hand, I will resist the temptation to describe the contents.

***Victorinus (Petau, 270-304):** Victorinus was a presbyter in the city of Petau, in modern day Austria. He wrote many exegetical and apologetic works, but fragments of only two have survived, one on *Creation* and a commentary on the *Apocalypse*. In spite of historical tampering and corruption, both surviving works clearly show that he was a chiliast, stating clearly his belief in six thousand years from creation to the return of Christ followed by the Millennial Sabbath. To make this point, Tim provides the following quotation from Victorinus’ treatise on the *Creation*.

And in Matthew we read, that it is written Isaiah also and the rest of his colleagues broke the Sabbath – that that true and just Sabbath should be observed in the seventh millenary of years. Wherefore to those seven days the Lord attributed to each a thousand years; for thus went the warning: “In Thine eyes, O Lord, a thousand years are as one day.” Therefore in the eyes of the Lord each thousand of years is ordained, for I find that the Lord’s eyes are seven. Wherefore, as I have narrated, that true Sabbath will be in the seventh millenary of years, when Christ with His elect shall reign.

To gain further insight into how Victorinus explained this interpretation, we need more of the context. Both what appears before and what comes after are instructive. Leading up to this quote is a discussion on the Jewish Sabbaths. The point Victorinus is making is that the Jewish Sabbaths were never true Sabbaths and had always been despised by Christ. He also enjoins his readers to rigorously avoid any appearance of observing any Jewish Sabbaths.

This sixth day is called *parasceve*, that is to say, the preparation of the kingdom. For He perfected Adam, whom *He made* after His image and likeness... On this day also, on account of the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ, we make either a station to God, or a fast. On the seventh day He rested from all His works, and blessed it, and sanctified it. On the former day we are accustomed to fast rigorously, that on the Lord’s day we may go forth to our bread with giving of thanks. **And let the *parasceve* become a rigorous fast, lest we should appear to observe any Sabbath with the Jews, which Christ Himself, the Lord of the Sabbath, says by His prophets that “His soul hateth;”** which Sabbath He in His body abolished... And thus in the sixth Psalm for the eighth day, David asks the Lord that He would not rebuke him in His anger, nor judge him in His fury; for this is indeed the eighth day of that future judgment, which will pass beyond the order of the sevenfold arrangement. Jesus [Joshua] also, the son of Nave, the successor of Moses, himself broke the Sabbath-day; for on the Sabbath-day he commanded the children of Israel to go round the walls of the city of Jericho with trumpets, and declare war against the aliens. Matthias also, prince of Judah, broke the Sabbath; for he slew the prefect of Antiochus the king of Syria on the Sabbath, and subdued the foreigners by pursuing them. And in Matthew we read, that it is written Isaiah also and the rest of his colleagues broke the Sabbath – **that that true and just Sabbath should be observed in the seventh millenary of years.** Victorinus, *On the Creation of the World*

Inasmuch as Victorinus is teaching that the Jewish Sabbaths (in the Old Testament Scriptures) are not “the true Sabbath” and are to be despised, he is simply repeating what was said by Barnabas in his original prophecy. This introduces the quotation that Tim provided in his book and which I repeated above. It is at this point that Victorinus declares the doctrine of chiliasm and displays his dependence on Barnabas. Following this statement, Victorinus gives the Scriptural justification for the doctrine as follows.

Wherefore, as I have narrated, that true Sabbath will be in the seventh millenary of years, when Christ with His elect shall reign. Moreover, the seven heavens¹²⁶ agree with those days; for thus we are warned: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the powers of them by the spirit of His mouth." There are seven spirits. Their names are the spirits which abode on the Christ of God, as was intimated in Isaiah the prophet: "And there rests upon Him the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of wisdom and of piety, and the spirit of God's fear hath filled Him." Therefore the highest heaven is the heaven of wisdom; the second, of understanding; the third, of counsel; the fourth, of might; the fifth, of knowledge; the sixth, of piety; the seventh, of God's fear. From this,¹²⁷ therefore, the thunders bellow, the lightnings are kindled, the fires are heaped together; fiery darts appear, stars gleam, the anxiety caused by the dreadful comet is aroused. Sometimes it happens that the sun and moon approach one another, and cause those more than frightful appearances, radiating with light in the field of their aspect... Behold the seven horns of the Lamb, the seven eyes of God – the seven eyes are the seven spirits of the Lamb; seven torches burning before the throne of God seven golden candlesticks, seven young sheep, the seven women in Isaiah, the seven churches in Paul, seven deacons, seven angels, seven trumpets, seven seals to the book, seven periods of seven days with which Pentecost is completed, the seven weeks in Daniel, also the forty-three weeks in Daniel; with Noah, seven of all clean things in the ark; seven revenges of Cain, seven years for a debt to be acquitted, the lamp with seven orifices, seven pillars of wisdom in the house of Solomon. Now, therefore, you may see that it is being told you of the unerring glory of God in providence; yet, as far as my small capacity shall be able, I will endeavour to set it forth. That He might re-create that Adam by means of the week, and bring aid to His entire creation, was accomplished by the nativity of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Who, then, that is taught in the law of God, who that is filled with the Holy Spirit, does not see in his heart, that on the same day on which the dragon seduced Eve, the angel Gabriel brought the glad tidings to the Virgin Mary; that on the same day the Holy Spirit overflowed the Virgin Mary, on which He made light; that on that day He was incarnate in flesh, in which He made the land and water; that on the same day He was put to the breast, on which He made the stars; that on the same day He was circumcised, on which the land and water brought forth their offspring; that on the same day He was incarnated, on which He formed man out of the ground; that on the same day Christ was born, on which He formed man; that on that day He suffered, on which Adam fell; that on the same day He rose again from the dead, on which He created light? He, moreover, consummates His humanity in the number seven: of

¹²⁶ In the ancient cosmology, the heavens were divided into eight spheres. The seven inner spheres are those of the seven planets, (which appear to move, and which had been discovered by that time. The immovable stars were in the eighth sphere, which was the abode of spirits.

¹²⁷ That is, the seventh or lowest heaven.

His nativity, His infancy, His boyhood, His youth, His young-manhood, His mature age, His death.

Victorinus wrote approximately 20-30 years after Cyprian. It is evident that Victorinus borrowed Cyprian's use of the number seven in Scripture and expanded on it. He listed all of the same occurrences of the number seven that Cyprian listed with the exception of the seven Maccabees. And to Cyprian's list, Victorinus added seven torches, seven young sheep, seven deacons, seven trumpets, seven seals, seven weeks to Pentecost, seven weeks in Daniel, seven clean animals in the ark, seven revenges on Cain, and seven weeks of years in a Jubilee. Victorinus' defense of chiliasm, like all of the chiliasts before him, is the allegorical interpretation of every instance of the number seven he could find in Scripture. He even borrowed from the cosmology of his day which thought there were seven heavens (spherical in shape) below an eighth heaven where spirits dwelt. Notice also Victorinus' reference to the eighth day following the completion of 7,000 years, "*indeed the eighth day of that future judgment, which will pass beyond the order of the sevenfold arrangement.*" And to drive home the truth of his argument, he asks, "*Who, then, that is taught in the law of God, who that is filled with the Holy Spirit, does not see [this truth] in his heart...*"

What appears in Victorinus' chiliasm is the unmistakable fingerprints of Barnabas' prophecy, Barnabas' anti-Jewish sentiment, and Barnabas' allegorical method of interpretation. With regard to allegorical interpretation, however, each of the chiliasts have progressively enlarged on Barnabas.

Pierius (Alexandria, 275): Presbyter in the city of Alexandria and at one time president of the Alexandrian school. Pierius wrote numerous exegetical works, but all that remain are two fragments. He shared the opinions and errors of Origin.

Theonas (Alexandria, 282-300): A presbyter of Alexandria for 18 years and for that reason, he was most likely amillennial. All that remains of his writings is a personal letter.

Summary of Third Century: There were 21 authors in the third century. These writings show that the three new doctrines – chiliasm, historic premillennialism, and amillennialism – had almost completely displaced the simple, primitive eschatology. Amillennialism had the advantage and gained considerable momentum with the establishment of the school in Alexandria whose influence was felt everywhere. It was rapidly becoming the dominant viewpoint.

Of the 21 third-century authors whose writings have survived, four were clearly chiliasts (Hippolytus, Commodianus, Cyprian, and Victorinus). There was one historic premillennialist (Tertullian). One most likely held to the primitive eschatology (Julius

Africanus). Ten were almost certainly amillennialists and five cannot be determined with any confidence.

§D6: The Fourth Century prior to the Council of Nicaea was a time of considerable evolution in all areas of theology, including eschatology. There was no longer any trace of the primitive eschatology. Both of the chiliasts from this period explicitly taught that the resurrection of the body will be temporary.

Arnobius (Sicca, 297-303): Arnobius wrote seven books *Against the Heathen* at the end of the third or beginning of the fourth century. It is difficult to comment on his works in general because the reasoning is not always lucid and sometimes contradictory. In any case, he did affirm his belief in the resurrection of the flesh. He did not believe in the immortality of the soul, but believed in the “true immortality” that will be brought in by the resurrection. He also referred repeatedly to historical events “ten thousand years ago.” On this last account, he could not have been a chiliast. Beyond that, I cannot find anything that reveals his opinions on eschatology.

Alexander of Lycopolis (Lycopolis, 301): Bishop of Lycopolis in Upper Egypt. He wrote a short treatise against the Manichaean sect. Although this work does not specifically deal with eschatology, the editors describe him as an Alexandrian in his thought and method.

Phileas (Thmuis, Martyred in 307): Thmuis was a city in Egypt near Alexandria. Only a few fragments remain. One is a stirring epistle written to the people of Thmuis, exhorting them to be faithful unto death. A second is an epistle written to Meletius, bishop of Lycopolis, who founded the Meletian sect. This schism appears to have had nothing to do with doctrine, but only with ecclesiastical authority and order. There is nothing in any of the fragments to indicate his view on eschatology.

Pamphilus (Caesarea, Martyred 309): Pamphilus was a native of Phoenicia. He studied at the school in Alexandria and was afterward made a presbyter in Palestinian Caesarea where he founded his own school built on the model of the school in Alexandria. The school of Pamphilus devoted itself to exposition, and to the transcription and dissemination of Scripture and of ecclesiastical writings, primarily those of Origen to whom he was devoted. All that remains of Pamphilus’ own writings are a few fragments and part of a commentary on the Book of Acts. Given his devotion to the Alexandrian school and to Origen himself, he is safe to classify Pamphilus as amillennial.

Peter of Alexandria (Alexandria, 300-311, Martyred 311): Peter was bishop of Alexandria for 12 years. He was certainly amillennial. Here are a few quotations from the fragments that survive.

A cycle of two hundred and eighty-five years from the incarnation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ had rolled round, when the venerable Theonas, the bishop of this city, by an ethereal flight, mounted upwards to the celestial kingdoms. *The Genuine Acts of Peter*

For thus will they be the rather profited, meditating upon the prophet's words, and saying, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called the Messenger of My mighty counsel." Who, as ye know, when another infant in the sixth month of his conception had preached before His coming repentance for the remission of sins, was himself also conceived to preach repentance. Moreover, we hear both also preaching, in the first place, not only repentance, but the kingdom of heaven, which, as we have learned, is within us; for the word which we believe is near us, in our mouth, and in our heart; which they, being put in remembrance of, will learn to confess with their mouths that Jesus is the Christ; believing in their heart that God hath raised him from the dead, and being as those who hear, that "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." *Canonical Epistle of Peter, Canon V*

***Methodius (Olympus and Patara in Lycia → Tyre, Martyred 312):** Methodius was simultaneously bishop of Olympus and Patara and later of Tyre. There is only one of Methodius' many writings that have survived in its entirety. This is the *Banquet of the Ten Virgins*, which is the work that Tim quotes from. There are also numerous fragments from others of his works. Methodius has been called, "the antagonist of Origen," and Tim makes much of this designation. He has a footnote regarding Methodius which reads,

Methodius was a bishop of the churches of Olympus and Patara in Lycia (Turkey), and was martyred for the Faith in AD 312. He was an outspoken opponent and critic of Origen – the enemy of chiliasm. The philosophical speculations and allegorical approach to Scripture made popular by Origen eventually led to the decline and eventual extinction of chiliasm in Christianity. (69)

This footnote gives the impression that Methodius was a careful, literal expositor of Scripture and that this led him to chiliasm. But that impression is false. Methodius opposed Origen's conclusions (particularly Origen's denial of the resurrection of the body) but he did not oppose Origen's allegorical approach to Scripture. As we have seen, all of the chiliasts used allegorical methods to teach and defend it. Methodius employed the same allegorical methods as Origen, but arrived at different conclusions. Consider the following example. Methodius wrote,

The history of Jonah contains a great mystery. For it seems that the whale signifies Time, which never stands still, but is always going on, and consumes

the things which are made by long and shorter intervals. But Jonah, who fled from the presence of God, is himself the first man who, having transgressed the law, fled from being seen naked of immortality, having lost through sin his confidence in the Deity. And the ship in which he embarked, and which was tempest-tossed, is this brief and hard life in the present time; just as though we had turned and removed from that blessed and secure life, to that which was most tempestuous and unstable, as from solid land to a ship. For what a ship is to the land, that our present life is to that which is immortal. And the storm and the tempests which beat against us are the temptations of this life, which in the world, as in a tempestuous sea, do not permit us to have a fair voyage free from pain, in a calm sea, and one which is free from evils. And the casting of Jonah from the ship into the sea, signifies the fall of the first man from life to death, who received that sentence because, through having sinned, he fell from righteousness: "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." And his being swallowed by the whale signifies our inevitable removal by time. For the belly in which Jonah, when he was swallowed, was concealed, is the all-receiving earth, which receives all things which are consumed by time.

As, then, Jonah spent three days and as many nights in the whale's belly, and was delivered up sound again, so shall we all, who have passed through the three stages of our present life on earth—I mean the beginning, the middle, and the end, of which all this present time consists—rise again. For there are altogether three intervals of time, the past, the future, and the present. And for this reason the Lord spent so many days in the earth symbolically, thereby teaching clearly that when the forementioned intervals of time have been fulfilled, then shall come our resurrection, which is the beginning of the future age, and the end of this. For in that age there is neither past nor future, but only the present. Moreover, Jonah having spent three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, was not destroyed by his flesh being dissolved, as is the case with that natural decomposition which takes place in the belly, in the case of those meats which enter into it, on account of the greater heat in the liquids, that it might be shown that these bodies of ours may remain undestroyed. Fragment,
On the History of Jonah

The conclusion of this passage is essentially correct as far as it goes – there shall be a resurrection of the body – but the allegorical method used to reach the conclusion is subjective and erroneous. So, while Methodius was indeed the antagonist of Origen, he is not an example of proper interpretation. Furthermore, the more closely we look at Methodius' theology, the more it becomes apparent that he came very close to teaching a form of Gnosticism in which the flesh is evil and the soul is good.

This brings us to the *Banquet of the Ten Virgins* from which Tim quotes. The two quotations Tim *provides* are as follows.

For since in six days God made the heaven and the earth, and finished the whole world, and rested on the seventh day from all His works which He had made, and blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, so by a figure in the seventh month, when the fruits of the earth have been gathered in, we are commanded to keep the feast to the Lord, which signifies that, when this world shall be terminated at the seventh thousand years, when God shall have completed the world, He shall rejoice in us... Then, when the appointed times shall have been accomplished, and God shall have ceased to form this creation, in the seventh month, the great resurrection-day, it is commanded that the Feast of our Tabernacles shall be celebrated to the Lord, of which the things said in Leviticus are symbols and figures. Methodius, *Discourse IX*, ch. i

For I also, taking my journey, and going forth from the Egypt of this life... celebrate with Christ the millennium of rest, which is called the seventh day, even the true Sabbath. Methodius, *Discourse IX*, ch. v

These quotations have been carefully excised from their contexts. Without their contexts, the quotations on appearance could have been taken from an exegetical commentary on Scripture or a treatise on eschatology. The impression that is felt from Tim's use of these statements is that through careful exposition of Scripture, Methodius arrived at the doctrine chiliasm. But when the context is restored (both what comes before and what comes after), when the ellipses are filled in with the original wording, when periods are replaced by their original commas so that Methodius is allowed to finish his sentences, and when the correct citations are brought out, an entirely different impression is felt. If Methodius can be claimed as a "chiliast," then he certainly was not one which Tim could agree with on virtually anything else. If there is such a thing as a "gnostic chiliast," then that would be an accurate description of Methodius.

To restore these quotations to their proper context so that a truthful impression and evaluation is possible, it is necessary to go to some length. This is partly because of the length of the book itself and partly because of the genre.¹²⁸ The *Banquet of the Ten Virgins* is an allegorical account of a debate between ten virgin sisters to determine which of them can make the most compelling argument for virginity. The names of the ten virgins are *Marcella*, *Theophila*, *Thaleia*, *Theopatra*, *Thallousa*, *Agathe*, *Procilla*, *Thekla*, *Tusiane*, and *Domnina*. The debate is moderated by *Euboulios* (a man) and *Gregorion* (a woman). Each of the ten virgins takes her turn expounding on the necessity of virginity for salvation and the winner of the contest is determined by *Arete*,

¹²⁸ The Banquet is an allegory similar to John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Of course, Bunyan's work had a different purpose.

the daughter of *Philosophia*.¹²⁹ A sampling of the arguments is worth considering. Marcella begins the contest as follows.

Virginity is something supernaturally great, wonderful, and glorious; and, to speak plainly and in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, this best and noblest manner of life alone is the root of immortality, and also its flower and first-fruits; and for this reason the Lord promises that those shall enter into the kingdom of heaven who have made themselves eunuchs, in that passage of the Gospels in which He lays down the various reasons for which men have made themselves eunuchs. *Banquet Discourse I, Marcella, Chapter 1*

This sets the tone for the entire book. Marcella compares sexual intercourse with rotting flesh. This rottenness can only be cured with the unceasing attention to divine teaching.

For as the putrid humours and matter of flesh, and all those things which corrupt it, are driven out by salt, in the same manner all the irrational appetites of a virgin are banished from the body by divine teaching. For it must needs be that the soul which is not sprinkled with the words of Christ, as with salt, should stink and breed worms, as King David, openly confessing with tears in the mountains, cried out, "My wounds stink and are corrupt," because he had not salted himself with the exercises of self-control, and so subdued his carnal appetites, but self-indulgently had yielded to them, and became corrupted in adultery. And hence, in Leviticus, every gift, unless it be seasoned with salt, is forbidden to be offered as an oblation to the Lord God. *Banquet Discourse I, Marcella, Chapter 1*

Marcella argues that in the beginning of the world, sex was necessary to populate the earth, but that purpose has been attained and now is the time for virginity, which is the path to immortality.

God thus mercifully bringing to our race the needful help in due season, as parents do to their children. For they do not at once set masters over them, but allow them, during the period of childhood, to amuse themselves like young animals, and first send them to teachers stammering like themselves, until they cast off the youthful wool of the mind, and go onwards to the practice of greater things, and from thence again to that of greater still. And thus we must consider that the God and Father of all acted towards our forefathers. For the world, while still unfilled with men, was like a child, and it was necessary that it should first be filled with these, and so grow to manhood. But when hereafter it was colonized from end to end, the race of man spreading to a boundless extent, God no longer allowed man to remain in the same ways, considering how they might now proceed from one point to another, and advance nearer to heaven, until, having

¹²⁹ As in most allegorical stories, the names have symbolic meaning: Marcella (warrior), Theophila (loving God), Thaleia (blossom), Theopatra (God is her father), Thallousa (flourishing), Agathe (good, kind), Procilla (venerable), Thekla (glory of God), Tusiane (sacrifice), Domnina (mistress), Euboulios (good-will), Gregorion (watchful), Arete (virtue), Philosophia (philosophy, love of wisdom).

attained to the very greatest and most exalted lesson of virginity, they should reach to perfection; that first they should abandon the intermarriage of brothers and sisters, and marry wives from other families; and then that they should no longer have many wives, like brute beasts, as though born for the mere propagation of the species; and then that they should not be adulterers; and then again that they should go on to continence, and from continence to virginity, when, having trained themselves to despise the flesh, they sail fearlessly into the peaceful haven of immortality. *Banquet Discourse I, Marcella, Chapter 2*

We have already spoken of the periods of the human race, and how, beginning with the intermarriage of brothers and sisters, it went on to continence; and we have now left for us the subject of virginity. Let us then endeavour to speak of this as well as we can. And first let us inquire for what reason it was that no one of the many patriarchs and prophets and righteous men, who taught and did many noble things, either praised or chose the state of virginity. Because it was reserved for the Lord alone to be the first to teach this doctrine, since He alone, coming down to us, taught man to draw near to God; for it was fitting that He who was first and chief of priests, of prophets, and of angels, should also be saluted as first and chief of virgins. For in old times man was not yet perfect, and for this reason was unable to receive perfection, which is virginity. *Banquet Discourse I, Marcella, Chapter 4*

The next to speak is Theophila. She points out the obvious flaw in Marcella's discourse which is that if all were to become virgins, then the human race would soon become extinct. Therefore, some provision must be made for procreation. She says,

Since Marcella has excellently begun this discussion without sufficiently completing it, it is necessary that I should endeavour to put a finish to it. Now, the fact that man has advanced by degrees to virginity, God urging him on from time to time, seems to me to have been admirably proved; but I cannot say the same *as to the assertion* that from henceforth they should no longer beget children. For I think I have perceived clearly from the Scriptures that, after He had brought in virginity, the Word did not altogether abolish the generation of children; for although the moon may be greater than the stars, the light of the other stars is not destroyed by the moonlight... But at present man must cooperate in the forming of the image of God, while the world exists and is still being formed; for it is said, "Increase and multiply." And we must not be offended at the ordinance of the Creator, from which, moreover, we ourselves have our being. *Banquet Discourse II, Theophila, Chapter 1*

Theophila then introduces the idea that souls are the image of God and created by Him and that these souls are sent down from heaven by God when the "house" of our flesh is being formed. Thus, our flesh is the "garment" for the soul.

And now that these things are completed, it remains for you to apply this picture, my wisest of friends, to the things which have been already spoken of; comparing the house to the invisible nature of our generation, and the entrance adjacent to the mountains to the sending down of our souls from heaven, and their descent into the bodies; the holes to the female sex, and the modeler to the creative power of God, which, under the cover of generation, making use of our nature, invisibly forms us men within, working the garments for the souls. *Banquet Discourse II, Theophila, Chapter 5*

And perhaps there will be room for some to argue plausibly among those who are wanting in discrimination and judgment, that this fleshly garment of the soul, being planted by men, is shaped spontaneously apart from the sentence of God. If, however, he should teach that the immortal being of the soul also is sown along with the mortal body, he will not be believed; for the Almighty alone breathes into man the undying and undecaying part, as also it is He alone who is Creator of the invisible and indestructible. For, He says, He “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” *Banquet Discourse II, Theophila, Chapter 7*

In other words, since flesh is a necessary garment for the immortal soul and image of God, procreation cannot be altogether done away with. Consequently, Theophila concludes that while virginity is the chief virtue, it is only given to some. Others, who cannot receive it, must be permitted to procreate. Thus, there are two classes of Christians. She explains,

Now the word, in setting forth that which is better and sweeter, did not intend to take away the inferior, but arranges so as to assign to each its own proper use and advantage. For there are some to whom it is not given to attain virginity; and there are others whom He no longer wills to be excited by procreations to lust, and to be defiled, but henceforth to meditate and to keep the mind upon the transformation of the body to the likeness of angels, when they “neither marry nor are given in marriage,” according to the infallible words of the Lord; since it is not given to all to attain that undefiled state of being a eunuch for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, but manifestly to those only who are able to preserve the ever-blooming and unfading flower of virginity. *Banquet Discourse II, Theophila, Chapter 7*

It is easy to see how this mode of thinking led directly to asceticism, monasticism and to the establishing of orders of nuns and a celibate priesthood. But for our purpose, it is more important to observe the mention of “*the transformation of the body to the likeness of angels*.” In Methodius’ theology, as we will soon see, the resurrection of the body is itself an *intermediate* step, not the final step in glorification.

The next to speak is Thaleia, who mildly rebukes Theophila for taking the passages in Genesis regarding procreation too literally and she points out that Paul, in dealing with the same passage, refers it to “Christ and the church.” She says,

Now we should consider the case of the renowned Paul, that when he was not yet perfect in Christ, he was first born and suckled, Ananias preaching to him, and renewing him in baptism, as the history in the Acts relates. But when he was grown to a man, and was built up, then being moulded to spiritual perfection, he was made the help-meet and bride of the Word; and receiving and conceiving the seeds of life, he who was before a child, becomes a church and a mother, himself labouring in birth of those who, through him, believed in the Lord, until Christ was formed and born in them also. For he says, “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you;” and again, “In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel.” It is evident, then, that the statement respecting Eve and Adam is to be referred to the Church and Christ. For this is truly a great mystery and a supernatural, of which I, from my weakness and dulness, am unable to speak, according to its worth and greatness. Nevertheless, let us attempt it. It remains that I speak to you on what follows, and of its signification. *Banquet Discourse III, Thaleia, Chapter 9*

She argues that the Scriptures must be understood as having both a “natural” and a “spiritual” sense. We err if we exclude either one or the other. Thus she reaches a conclusion somewhere intermediate between Marcella and Theophila.

There would be value in going through all ten discourses and tracing out in detail both their arguments regarding virginity and also the points they make touching on other areas of theology and scriptural interpretation. But this would consume too much time and space. I will attempt to focus on those statements which bear directly on eschatology.

The next to speak is Theopatra. She begins unambiguously,

Now I at least seem to perceive that nothing has been such a means of restoring men to paradise, and of the change to incorruption, and of reconciliation to God, and such a means of salvation to men, by guiding us to life, as chastity. *Banquet Discourse IV, Theopatra, Chapter 2*

This actually has direct bearing on eschatology which will become clear momentarily. Observe the reference to “*restoring men to paradise*.” In Methodius’ theology (and eschatology), the goal of the Christian walk is to be restored to the joys of “paradise” which were lost through the first transgression. After making this declaration, Theopatra describes the miserable state of man as a...

...stream of corruption poured forth abundantly, and running along in violent currents, not only fiercely swept along whatever touched it from without, but also

rushing within it, overwhelmed the souls of men. And they, continuously exposed to this, were carried along dumb and stupid, neglecting to pilot their vessels, from having nothing firm to lay hold of. *Banquet Discourse IV, Theopatra, Chapter 2*

Seeing man in this miserable state, God is moved to compassion and sends help. Theopatra explains.

Wherefore God, pitying us who were in such a condition, and were able neither to stand nor to rise, sent down from heaven the best and most glorious help...

What was this “*best and most glorious help*” which God sent to us? If you, dear Reader, guessed that it was “*His only begotten Son,*” or “*grace,*” or “*the Gospel of Christ,*” then you would be mistaken. But if you guessed that it was “*virginity,*” then you have grasped Methodius’ theology as well as the tone and message of this book. Theopatra says,

Wherefore God, pitying us who were in such a condition, and were able neither to stand nor to rise, sent down from heaven the best and most glorious help, virginity, that by it we might tie our bodies fast, like ships, and have a calm, coming to an anchorage without damage, as also the Holy Spirit witnesses. *Banquet Discourse IV, Theopatra, Chapter 2*

That is the Gospel according to Methodius. Where does “*the Holy Spirit witness*” this? Theopatra explains that this is spoken in Psalm 137. This explanation helps us to gain a further understanding of Methodius’ eschatology. Theopatra continues.

For this is said in the hundred and thirty-sixth psalm,¹³⁰ where the souls send joyfully up to God a hymn of thanksgiving, as many as have been taken hold of and raised up to walk with Christ in heaven, that they might not be overwhelmed by the streams of the world and the flesh. Whence, also, they say that Pharaoh was a type of the devil in Egypt, since he mercilessly commanded the males to be cast into the river, but the females to be preserved alive. For the devil, ruling from Adam to Moses over this great Egypt, the world, took care to have the male and rational offspring of the soul carried away and destroyed by the streams of passions, but he longs for the carnal and irrational offspring to increase and multiply. *Banquet Discourse IV, Theopatra, Chapter 2*

The passage to which Theopatra is alluding reads as follows.

¹ *By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept
When we remembered Zion.*

² *We hung our harps
Upon the willows in the midst of it.*

³ *For there those who carried us away captive asked of us a song,*

¹³⁰ In our English versions it is Psalm 137.

*And those who plundered us requested mirth,
 Saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"
⁴ How shall we sing the Lord's song
 In a foreign land?
⁵ If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
 Let my right hand forget its skill!
⁶ If I do not remember you,
 Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth—
 If I do not exalt Jerusalem
 Above my chief joy. Psalm 137:1-3*

In Methodius' theology, "Zion" and "Jerusalem" are symbols of "paradise" (heaven) and represent a pure and chaste existence. To be exiled from "Zion" represents the fallen state of man cast out of paradise. Methodius interprets this Psalm (through the mouth of Theopatra) as "souls" praying not to be "*overwhelmed by the streams of the world and the flesh.*" "*Babylon*" is the world. The "*Rivers of Babylon*" are sexual enticements. The souls who pray to God this way are represented as "*male and rational.*" These are the souls which the devil seeks to destroy by means of sexual passion. The souls whom the devil seeks to preserve alive are "*female and irrational.*"

Where does "virginity" appear in this Psalm? In case you missed it, it is in Verse 2. Theopatra explains.

If, then, the rivers of Babylon are the streams of voluptuousness, as wise men say, which confuse and disturb the soul, then the willows must be chastity, to which we may suspend and draw up the organs of lust which overbalance and weigh down the mind, so that they may not be borne down by the torrents of incontinence, and be drawn like worms to impurity and corruption. For God has bestowed upon us virginity as a most useful and a serviceable help towards incorruption, sending it as an ally to those who are contending for and longing after Zion, as the psalm shows, which is resplendent charity and the commandment respecting it, for Zion is interpreted "The commandment of the watchtower." *Banquet Discourse IV, Theopatra, Chapter IV*

As Methodius interprets the Psalm, the "*harps*" are our physical *organs of lust* and the "*willows*" are *virginity*, to which those who "*are contending for and longing after Zion*" suspend their physical bodies. This is necessary in order to attain to *incorruption*.

Who are those who "*sing the Lord's song in a strange land*"? Incredibly, according to Methodius, they are the Jews who are actually singing to the Evil One. Why does he make this accusation? In part, it is because they are "*expecting a sensual kingdom, and setting their hopes on this alien world.*"

Now, let us here enumerate the points which follow. For why do the souls declare that they were asked by those who led them captive to sing the Lord's song in a

strange land? Surely because the Gospel teaches a holy and secret song, which sinners and adulterers sing to the Evil One. For they insult the commandments, accomplishing the will of the spirits of evil, and cast holy things to dogs, and pearls before swine, in the same manner as those of whom the prophet says with indignation, "They read the law without;" for the Jews were not to read the law going forth out of the gates of Jerusalem or out of their houses; and for this reason the prophet blames them strongly, and cries that they were liable to condemnation, because, while they were transgressing the commandments, and acting impiously towards God, they were pretentiously reading the law, as if, forsooth, they were piously observing its precepts; but they did not receive it in their souls, holding it firmly with faith, but rejected it, denying it by their works. And hence they sing the Lord's song in a strange land, explaining the law by distorting and degrading it, **expecting a sensual kingdom, and setting their hopes on this alien world**, which the Word says will pass away, where those who carry them captive entice them with pleasures, lying in wait to deceive them.

Banquet Discourse IV, Theopatra, Chapter IV

Thus, in Methodius' eschatology, there is no room for a future kingdom situated on this physical world. The kingdom that he longs for is to escape "this alien world" and fly upward to heaven. Theopatra continues.

Now, those who sing the Gospel to senseless people seem to sing the Lord's song in a strange land, of which Christ is not the husbandman; but those who have put on and shone in the most pure and bright, and unmingled and pious and becoming, ornament of virginity, and are found barren and unproductive of unsettled and grievous passions, do not sing the song in a strange land; **because** they are not borne thither by their hopes, nor do they stick fast in the lusts of their mortal bodies, nor do they take a low view of the meaning of the commandments, but well and nobly, with a lofty disposition, they have regard to the promises which are above, **thirsting for heaven as a congenial abode**, whence God, approving their dispositions, promises with an oath to give them choice honours, appointing and establishing them "above His chief joy;" for He says thus: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy"; meaning by Jerusalem, as I said, these very undefiled and incorrupt souls, which, having with self-denial drawn in the pure draught of virginity with unpolluted lips, are "espoused to one husband," to be presented "as a chaste virgin to Christ" **in heaven**, "having gotten the victory, striving for undefiled rewards." Hence also the prophet Isaiah proclaims, saying, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." **Now these promises, it is evident to every one, will be fulfilled after the resurrection. For the Holy Spirit does not speak of that well-known town in Judea; but truly of that heavenly city**, the blessed Jerusalem, which He declares to be the assembly of the souls which God plainly promises to place first, "above His chief joy," in the new dispensation, **settling those who are**

clothed in the most white robe of virginity in the pure dwelling of unapproachable light; because they had it not in mind to put off their wedding garment—that is, to relax their minds by wandering thoughts. *Banquet Discourse IV, Theopatra, Chapter IV*

The next to speak is Thallousa. To the previous discourses she adds many additional allegorical allusions to virginity and to heaven in the ornaments of the Tabernacle and Temple. In a nutshell, the ordinances of the Old Testament were symbols of the church and the church is the image of heaven. She also adds the point that true consecration to God consists of more than mere virginity. It must bring with it consecration of all of our members: our words, thoughts, hands, and feet. We must keep our “temple” entirely pure if we hope to attain to incorruption and immortality.

After Thallousa, it is Agathe’s turn to speak. Agathe expounds more on the “soul.” In Methodius’ theology, the soul is the image of God in man, being immortal, indestructible, unbegotten, beautiful, and unchangeable. Agathe explains,

We have all come into this world, O virgins, endowed with singular beauty, which has a relationship and affinity to *divine* wisdom. For the souls of men do then most accurately resemble Him who begat and formed them, when, reflecting the unsullied representation of His likeness, and the features of that countenance, to which God looking formed them to have an immortal and indestructible shape, they remain such. For the unbegotten and incorporeal beauty, which neither begins nor is corruptible, but is unchangeable, and grows not old and has need of nothing, He resting in Himself, and in the very light which is in unspeakable and inapproachable places, embracing all things in the circumference of His power, creating and arranging, made the soul after the image of His image. Therefore, also, it is reasonable and immortal. *Banquet Discourse VI, Agathe, Chapter I*

The purpose then of virginity it to preserve the soul in this perfect condition. If we do this, we are assured of being ushered directly into heaven.

If, then, any one will keep this beauty inviolate and unharmed, and such as He who constructed it formed and fashioned it, imitating the eternal and intelligible nature of which man is the representation and likeness, and will become like a glorious and holy image, **he will be transferred thence to heaven**, the city of the blessed, and will dwell there as in a sanctuary. *Banquet Discourse VI, Agathe, Chapter II*

Through Agathe, Methodius also gives his interpretation of Christ’s Parable of the Ten Virgins. Predictably, the five who were wise preserved their virginity and the five foolish intended to do so, but succumbed to lust. Through his discussion of this parable, we also learn that Methodius did not believe in two resurrections separated by 1,000 years as in Revelation 20. All will be resurrected at the Parousia of Christ, both the wise and

the foolish, to be judged. This is more clearly explained later by Thekla, so I will refrain from quoting Agathe further.

The next to speak is Procilla. The most interesting facet of this discourse is that it consists almost entirely of interpretation and commentary on the Song of Solomon. Of course, the interpretations are all allegorical because...

For the Word loves none of the things of the flesh, because He is not of such a nature as to be contented with any of the things which are corruptible, as hands, or face, or feet; but He looks upon and delights in the beauty which is immaterial and spiritual, not touching the beauty of the body. *Banquet Discourse VII, Procilla*, Chapter I

Is that not one of the chief concepts of Gnosticism? One interesting conclusion Procilla reaches is that the destiny and rewards of believers are different based on "*the analogy of the faith of each*." Those who have procreated producing tribes and families will not be condemned, but they will not be immediately ushered into the heavenly kingdom. Martyrs and virgins are equal to each other and receive the highest rewards and are ushered first into the heavenly kingdom. Indeed, virgins ARE martyrs, as Procilla explains.

Let no one suppose that all the remaining company of those who have believed are condemned, thinking that we who are virgins alone shall be led on to attain the promises, not understanding that there shall be tribes and families and orders, according to the analogy of the faith of each. And this Paul, too, sets forth, saying, "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead." And the Lord does not profess to give the same honours to all; but to some He promises that they shall be numbered in the kingdom of heaven, to others the inheritance of the earth, and to others to see the Father. And here, also, He announces that the order and holy choir of the virgins shall first enter in company with Him into the rest of the new dispensation, as into a bridal chamber. For they were martyrs, not as bearing the pains of the body for a little moment of time, but as enduring them through all their life, not shrinking from truly wrestling in an Olympian contest for the prize of chastity; but resisting the fierce torments of pleasures and fears and griefs, and the other evils of the iniquity of men, they first of all carry off the prize, taking their place in the higher rank of those who receive the promise. Undoubtedly these are the souls whom the Word calls alone His chosen spouse and His sister, but the rest concubines and virgins and daughters, speaking thus: "There are threescore queens and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled, is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her: the daughters saw her and blessed her: yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her." For there being plainly many daughters of

the Church, one alone is the chosen and most precious in her eyes above all, namely, the order of virgins. *Banquet, Discourse VII, Procilla, Chapter 3*

Before leaving Procilla, there is one passage in her discourse which should be quoted as a component of Methodius' chiliasm. Tim does not quote this, but for completeness it should be brought forward.

Therefore God, that the race of man might not be wholly destroyed, through forgetfulness of the things which were good, commanded His own Son to reveal to the prophets His own future appearance in the world by the flesh, in which the joy and knowledge of the spiritual eighth day shall be proclaimed, which would bring the remission of sins and the resurrection, and that thereby the passions and corruptions of men would be circumcised. And, therefore, He called by the name of the eighty virgins the list of the prophets from Abraham, on account of the dignity of circumcision, which embraces the number eight, in accordance with which also the law is framed; because they first, before the Church was espoused to the Word, received the divine seed, and foretold the circumcision of the spiritual eighth day. *Banquet, Discourse VII, Procilla, Chapter 6*

What is the meaning of "*the spiritual eighth day*"? We have seen this before. It was first mentioned in the *Apocalypse of 2 Enoch* and then it was part of Barnabas' prophecy. Irenaeus and Victorinus added considerable detail and development to Barnabas' prophecy of the eighth day. Based on Barnabas' original prophecy, the construct is six days of creation corresponding to 6,000 years from Adam to the Parousia, followed by the seventh day which is the Millennial Sabbath. Then comes the "spiritual eighth day" corresponding to a new creation. Methodius leaves it somewhat cryptic in this context but he will return to it in the Discourse by Tusiane.

At the end of the debate, Arete announces the winner to be Thekla, who is next in the sequence. Because Thekla is the winner, and because her discourse contains much that bears on eschatology, we should consider her discourse carefully.

The first point that Thekla makes is that virgins go immediately into heaven upon the death of the body.

Now it is not right that the wing of virginity should, by its own nature, be weighed down upon the earth, but that it should soar upwards to heaven, to a pure atmosphere, and to the life which is akin to that of angels. Whence also they, first of all, after their call and departure hence, who have rightly and faithfully contended as virgins for Christ, bear away the prize of victory, being crowned by Him with the flowers of immortality. For, as soon as their souls have left the world, it is said that the angels meet them with much rejoicing, and conduct them to the very pastures already spoken of, to which also they were longing to come, contemplating them in imagination from afar, when, while they were yet dwelling

in their bodies, they appeared to them divine. *Banquet, Discourse VIII, Thekla, Chapter 2*

In the next chapter, Thekla describes heaven in some detail. The trees, flowers, fruits, that we see here and that seem so beautiful are only the “*shadows and apparitions*” and “*dim copies*” of what we¹³¹ will see in heaven when our eyes are finally opened. Those who feed themselves now from the “*tree of temperance*” are causing themselves to “*grow to immortality and a likeness to God.*”

Furthermore, when they have come hither, they see wonderful and glorious and blessed things of beauty, and such as cannot be spoken to men. They see there righteousness itself and prudence, and love itself, and truth and temperance, and other flowers and plants of wisdom, equally splendid, of which we here behold only the shadows and apparitions, as in dreams, and think that they consist of the actions of men, because there is no clear image of them here, but only dim copies, which themselves we see often when making dark copies of them. For never has any one seen with his eyes the greatness or the form or the beauty of righteousness itself, or of understanding, or of peace; but there, in Him whose name is I AM, they are seen perfect and clear, as they are. For there is a tree of temperance itself, and of love, and of understanding, as there are plants of the fruits which grow here—as of grapes, the pomegranate, and of apples; and so, too, the fruits of those trees are gathered and eaten, and do not perish and wither, but those who gather them grow to immortality and a likeness to God. *Banquet, Discourse VIII, Thekla, Chapter 3*

The next thing which is of supreme interest from Thekla’s discourse is Methodius’ interpretation of the vision of *the Woman, the Male Child, and the Dragon* in Revelation 12. This exposition begins in Chapter 4 and continues for nine chapters. All of it is germane to understanding Methodius’ eschatology but I can only present the main points as concisely as possible – but with sufficient quotations to constitute proof. Here is the text of Revelation 12 on which Methodius is expounding.

¹Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. ²Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. ³And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. ⁴His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. ⁵She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. ⁶Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

¹³¹ I am using the editorial “we” inasmuch as I, as a father, have already been disqualified from Methodius’ gospel.

In summary, Methodius' (Thekla's) interpretation of the elements of this vision is as follows:

The Woman = Our Mother, the Church (one universal, visible church)

The Sun = the Word

The Moon = the laver of baptism and faith

The Male Child = the faithful who are regenerated in the laver of baptism

The Dragon = the devil

The Stars Struck from Heaven = heresies

Seven Diadems = Incontinence, Luxury, Cowardice, Weakness, Unbelief, Folly, and Wickedness

Ten Horns = the ten opposites to the Ten Commandments

Caught Up to God and His Throne = the mind of the faithful fixated on God; i.e., the basis of truth against which there is no stumbling

The Wilderness = the abode of Arete (virtue); a state of perfectly fixing the mind on virtue

1,260 Days = a spiritual number symbolic of the Holy Trinity

It seems rather incredible that Methodius would interpret the Male Child not as Jesus Himself, but as representative of individual believers. But it is certain that he knew of others who did interpret the Child as Christ because he ridicules their interpretation derisively.¹³²

But, O faultfinder, not even to you will it be possible to show that Christ Himself is the one who is born. For long before the Apocalypse, the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word was fulfilled. And John speaks concerning things present and things to come. But Christ, long ago conceived, was not caught up to the throne of God when He was brought forth, from fear of the serpent injuring Him. But for this was He begotten, and Himself came down from the throne of the Father, that He should remain and subdue the dragon who made an assault upon the flesh. *Banquet, Discourse VIII, Thekla, Chapter 7*

¹³² Although Methodius continues with his exposition of this passage in great length, he never discusses the clause, "who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron." Of course, in Methodius' time, the church was still suffering persecution. It is easy to see how in just another 100 years this clause will be interpreted as the Roman Catholic Church ruling the nations. All of the other pieces have already been fitted to that interpretation.

The reason the child born (the regenerated believer) to the woman (the church) is said to be “male” is that in Methodius’ theology,¹³³ the male gender represents rationality and the female represents irrationality.

From whom did he flee? Surely from the dragon, that the spiritual Zion might bear a masculine people, who should come back from the passions and weakness of women to the unity of the Lord, and grow strong in manly virtue. *Banquet, Discourse VIII, Thekla, Chapter 7*

Why does Thekla report that a *third* of the stars are cast to the earth? The reason given is that all heresies devolve upon a corruption of one of the three Persons of the Trinity.

And the stars, which the dragon touched with the end of his tail, and drew them down to earth, are the bodies of heresies... But they are dragged down, being shaken out by the folds of the dragon, because they did not remain within the triangular forms of godliness, falling away from it with respect to an orthodox service. Whence also they are called the third part of the stars, as having gone astray with regard to one of the three Persons of the Trinity. As when they say, like Sabellios, that the Almighty Person of the Father Himself suffered; or as when they say, like Artemas, that the Person of the Son was born and manifested only in appearance; or when they contend, like the Ebionites, that the prophets spoke of the Person of the Spirit, of their own motion. *Banquet, Discourse VIII, Thekla, Chapter 10*

I have pointed out that the meaning of the 1,260 days is representative of the Trinity. It is also representative of the entire time of the church’s sojourn in the world until the end of the present age. I wish to quote Thekla’s lengthy explanation for this because it illustrates Methodius’ love for allegorical interpretation of numbers, which naturally leads into the next section dealing directly with Methodius’ chiliasm.

And the thousand two hundred and sixty days that we are staying here, O virgins, is the accurate and perfect understanding concerning the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit, in which our mother increases, and rejoices, and exults throughout this time, until the restitution of the new dispensation, when, coming into the assembly in the heavens, she will no longer contemplate the I AM through the means of *human* knowledge, but will clearly behold entering in together with Christ. For a thousand, consisting of a hundred multiplied by ten, embraces a full and perfect number, and is a symbol of the Father Himself, who made the universe by Himself, and rules all things for Himself. Two hundred embraces two perfect numbers united together, and is the symbol of the Holy Spirit, since He is the Author of our knowledge of the Son and the Father. But sixty has the number six multiplied by ten, and is a symbol of Christ, because the number six proceeding from unity is composed of its proper parts, so that nothing in it is

¹³³ It might be more correct to say in Methodius’ *Psychology*.

wanting or redundant, and is complete when resolved into its parts. Thus it is necessary that the number six, when it is divided into even parts by even parts, should again make up the same quantity from its separated segments. For, first, if divided equally, it makes three; then, if divided into three parts, it makes two; and again, if divided by six, it makes one, and is again collected into itself. For when divided into twice three, and three times two, and six times one, when the three and the two and the one are put together, they complete the six again. But everything is of necessity perfect which neither needs anything else in order to its completion, nor has anything over. *Banquet, Discourse VIII, Thekla, Chapter 10*

It is evident by now that Methodius is interpreting the passages in the Revelation which speak of the literal seven-year Tribulation in an allegorical fashion as meaning the entire church age. He does not regard them as a literal seven year period in fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy.

Tusiane, to whom we now come, is the ninth virgin to speak and the one from whom all of Tim's quotations are drawn and we now have sufficient background to properly evaluate those quotations in context. For our purpose,¹³⁴ Tusiane is also the most important. This discourse is the key to truly understanding Methodius' eschatology generally and his chiliasm particularly. This is where we will discover what he meant by "*the spiritual eighth day.*"

Tusiane's entire discourse of five chapters is a commentary on the *Feast of Tabernacles* in Leviticus 23:39-42. She begins her discourse as follows.

God, when He appointed to the true Israelites the legal rite of the true feast of the tabernacles, directed, in Leviticus, how they should keep and do honour to the feast; above all things, saying that each one should adorn his tabernacle with chastity. I will add the words themselves of Scripture, from which, without any doubt, it will be shown how agreeable to God, and acceptable to Him, is this ordinance of virginity: "In the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days: on the first day shall be a Sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a Sabbath. And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. And ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year. It shall be a statute for ever in your generations; ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths; that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." *Banquet, Discourse IX, Tusiane, Chapter 1*

¹³⁴ A survey of ECF eschatology.

We have already seen that Methodius always regards willow trees in Scripture as symbolic of virginity. And through the voice of Tusiane, he is about to do so again here and also to give his allegorical interpretation of each of the four trees mentioned in this passage.

But more importantly from the perspective of eschatology, we need to observe each of the details of the Feast of Tabernacles because they become crucial in Methodius' interpretation. Notice especially that the feast lasts seven days. This is critical. On the first day and on the last day of the feast, there is a Sabbath of rest.

But before delving into the details of her exposition, Tusiane has some harsh words for the Jews who interpreted and celebrated this ordinance literally. This paragraph immediately precedes the first passage that Tim quoted in *Time of the End* and is the preamble to it.

Here the Jews, fluttering about the bare letter of Scripture, like drones about the leaves of herbs, but not about flowers and fruits as the bee, fully believe that these words and ordinances were spoken concerning such a tabernacle as they erect; as if God delighted in those trivial adornments which they, preparing, fabricate from trees, not perceiving the wealth of good things to come; whereas these things, being like air and phantom shadows, foretell the resurrection and the putting up of our tabernacle that had fallen upon the earth, which at length, in the seventh thousand of years, resuming again immortal, we shall celebrate the great feast of true tabernacles in the new and indissoluble creation, the fruits of the earth having been gathered in, and men no longer begetting and begotten, but God resting from the works of creation. *Banquet, Discourse IX, Tusiane, Chapter 1*

Tusiane regards the Feast of Tabernacles as an allegory for the Resurrection, our bodies being "*tabernacles*" for our soul. "*Our tabernacle that had fallen upon the earth*" refers to physical death. "*The great feast of true tabernacles in the new and indissoluble creation*" refers to the resurrection which Tusiane says will be in the "*seventh thousand of years*." We now come to Tim's first quotation. The part in *italics* is the portion which Tim quotes on page 69. I have included the portion which Tim replaced with an ellipsis because I believe it is important.

For since in six days God made the heaven and the earth, and finished the whole world, and rested on the seventh day from all His works which He had made, and blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, so by a figure in the seventh month, when the fruits of the earth have been gathered in, we are commanded to keep the feast to the Lord, which signifies that, when this world shall be terminated at the seventh thousand years, when God shall have completed the world, He shall rejoice in us. For now to this time all things are created by His all-sufficient will and inconceivable power; the earth still yielding its fruits, and the waters being

gathered together in their receptacles; and the light still severed from darkness, and the allotted number of men not yet being complete; and the sun arising to rule the day, and the moon the night; and four-footed creatures, and beasts, and creeping things arising from the earth, and winged creatures, and creatures that swim, from the water. *Then, when the appointed times shall have been accomplished, and God shall have ceased to form this creation, in the seventh month, the great resurrection-day, it is commanded that the Feast of our Tabernacles shall be celebrated to the Lord, of which the things said in Leviticus are symbols and figures*, which things, carefully investigating, we should consider the naked truth itself, for He saith, "A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: to understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings." *Banquet, Discourse IX, Tusiane, Chapter 1*

Notice that Methodius regards creation as ongoing in the present time. As long as there is still procreation, and the earth is still producing physical fruits, and there is still night and day, and there are still animals on the earth, God has not yet ceased to form this creation. At the beginning of the seventh thousand years, this will all cease and the world will be terminated and then will be celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days. At this point, Tusiane gives her second rebuke to the Jews for regarding these things literally.

Wherefore let it shame the Jews that they do not perceive the deep things of the Scriptures, thinking that nothing else than outward things are contained in the law and the prophets; for they, intent upon things earthly, have in greater esteem the riches of the world than the wealth which is of the soul. For since the Scriptures are in this way divided that some of them give the likeness of past events, some of them a type of the future, the miserable men, going back, deal with the figures of the future as if they were already things of the past. *Banquet, Discourse IX, Tusiane, Chapter 1*

In the next chapter, Tusiane continues to chastise the Jews and gives us the definition of Methodius' method of interpretation. She says,

And let these things be said for the sake of example, showing that the Jews have wonderfully fallen from the hope of future good, because they consider things present to be only signs of things already accomplished; whilst they do not perceive that the figures represent images, and images are the representatives of truth. *Banquet, Discourse IX, Tusiane, Chapter 2*

Methodius' method of interpretation consists of these three elements. *Figures* represent *images*, and images, in turn, represent *truth*. And just as the image is greater than the figure, so the truth is greater than the image. Tusiane then gives as her first example of this, the Law.

For the law is indeed the figure and the shadow of an image, that is, of the Gospel; but the image, namely, the Gospel, is the representative of truth itself.
Banquet, Discourse IX, Tusiane, Chapter 2

So the Law was a figure representing an image, and the image was the Gospel and the Church. But this image represents a greater truth. What is this greater truth of which the Gospel is only an image? Tusiane continues.

For the men of olden time and the law foretold to us the characteristics of the Church, and the Church represents those of the new dispensation which is to come. Whence we, having received Christ, saying, "I am the truth," know that shadows and figures have ceased; and we hasten on to the truth, proclaiming its glorious images. For now we know "in part," and as it were "through a glass," since that which is perfect has not yet come to us; namely, the kingdom of heaven and the resurrection, when "that which is in part shall be done away."
Banquet, Discourse IX, Tusiane, Chapter 2

So the greater truth is *the dispensation which is to come, namely, the kingdom of heaven and the resurrection*. Tusiane explains explicitly.

For then will all our tabernacles be firmly set up, when again the body shall rise, with bones again joined and compacted with flesh. Then shall we celebrate truly to the Lord a glad festal-day, when we shall receive eternal tabernacles, no more to perish or be dissolved into the dust of the tomb. Now, our tabernacle was at first fixed in an immoveable state, but was moved by transgression and bent to the earth, God putting an end to sin by means of death, lest man immortal, living a sinner, and sin living in him, should be liable to eternal curse. Wherefore he died, although he had not been created liable to death or corruption, and the soul was separated from the flesh, that sin might perish by death, not being able to live longer in one dead. Whence sin being dead and destroyed, again I shall rise immortal; and I praise God who by means of death frees His sons from death, and I celebrate lawfully to His honour a festal-day, adorning my tabernacle, that is my flesh, with good works, as there did the five virgins with the five-lighted lamps. *Banquet, Discourse IX, Tusiane, Chapter 2*

From the perspective of soteriology,¹³⁵ this statement is not true. Tusiane regards sin as residing in the body but not affecting the soul. Sin is destroyed by means of the death of the body. Then when the body is resurrected and reunited with the soul, sin has perished.

From the perspective of eschatology, however, this statement appears so far to be essentially scriptural – a literal resurrection of the flesh. However, Tusiane is not finished. The resurrection as Tusiane has just described it is merely the *beginning* of the

¹³⁵ Soteriology is the doctrine of salvation.

Feast of Tabernacles. There are still seven days of the feast to come. Day One is the Judgment.

In the first day of the resurrection I am examined whether I bring these things which are commanded, whether I am adorned with virtuous works, whether I am overshadowed by the boughs of chastity. For account the resurrection to be the erection of the tabernacle. Account that the things which are taken for the putting together of the tabernacle are the works of righteousness. I take, therefore, on the first day the things which are set down, that is, on the day in which I stand to be judged, whether I have adorned my tabernacle with the things commanded; if those things are found on that day which here in time we are commanded to prepare, and there to offer to God. But come, let us consider what follows.
Banquet, Discourse IX, Tusiane, Chapter 3

At this point, Tusian goes on to expound in detail on the meaning of the four trees mentioned in Leviticus 23 in connection with the Feast of Tabernacles. Rather than quoting these details, here is the summary.

The boughs of goodly trees = “This signifies the exercise of divine discipline, by which the mind that subdues the passions is cleansed and adorned by the sweeping out and ejection from it of sins. For it is necessary to come cleansed and adorned to the feast, arrayed, as by a decorator, in the discipline and exercise of virtue. For the mind being cleansed by laborious exercises from the distracting thoughts which darken it, quickly perceives the truth; as the widow in the Gospels found the piece of money after she had swept the house and cast out the dirt, that is, the passions which obscure and cloud the mind, which increase in us from our luxuriousness and carelessness.”

Branches of palm-trees = “...that is, attentive meditation upon and study of the Scriptures.”

The boughs of thick trees = “charity” (love)

Willows of the brook = “it is by its very name the tree of chastity.”

It is necessary to bring these “trees” to the judgement which will take place on the first day of the feast. And as we will now see, the resurrection includes all persons, both the just and the unjust.¹³⁶ Tusiane also introduces here the Tree of Life. She states,

Such fruit it is necessary that we bring when we come to the judgment-seat of Christ, on the first day of the feast; for if we are without it we shall not be able to feast with God, nor to have part, according to John, in the first resurrection. For the tree of life is wisdom first begotten of all. “She is a tree of life to them that lay

¹³⁶ In Methodius’ eschatology there is no such thing as two resurrections separated by 1,000 years as in Revelation 20.

hold upon her,” says the prophet; “and happy is every one that retaineth her.” “A tree planted by the waterside, that will bring forth his fruit in due season”; that is, learning and charity and discretion are imparted in due time to those who come to the waters of redemption. He that hath not believed in Christ, nor hath understood that He is the first principle and the tree of life, since he cannot show to God his tabernacle adorned with the most goodly of fruits, how shall he celebrate the feast? How shall he rejoice? *Banquet, Discourse IX, Tusiane, Chapter 3*

What is to become of those who, having just been resurrected and coming to this judgment are not able to bring these “trees”? What happens to those who are not chaste?

Let the wanton now be gone, who, through their love of pleasure, reject chastity. How shall they enter into the feast with Christ who have not adorned their tabernacle with boughs of chastity, that God-making and blessed tree with which all who are hastening to that assembly and nuptial banquet ought to be begirt, and to cover their loins? For come, fair virgins, consider the Scripture itself, and its commands, how the Divine word has assumed chastity to be the crown of those virtues and duties that have been mentioned, showing how becoming and desirable it is for the resurrection, and that without it no one will obtain the promises which we who profess virginity supremely cultivate and offer to the Lord. *Banquet, Discourse IX, Tusiane, Chapter 4*

Thus, those who sin against chastity have no hope of “obtaining the promises.” Even those who marry are only permitted intercourse for the purpose of begetting children and this must be done with a minimum of pleasure. When procreation is finished, even they must retire to chastity.

They also possess it who live chastely with their wives, and do, as it were about the trunk, yield its lowly branches bearing chastity, not being able like us to reach its lofty and mighty boughs, or even to touch them; yet they, too, offer no less truly, although in a less degree, the branches of chastity. But those who are goaded on by their lusts, although they do not commit fornication, yet who, even in the things which are permitted with a lawful wife, through the heat of unsubdued concupiscence are excessive in embraces, how shall they celebrate the feast? How shall they rejoice, who have not adorned their tabernacle, that is their flesh, with the boughs of the Agnos, nor have listened to that which has been said, that “they that have wives be as though they had none?” *Banquet, Discourse IX, Tusiane, Chapter 4*

So ends Day One of the Feast of the Tabernacles. The chaste enter into the feast and the unchaste are thrown out and perish. We now come to Chapter 5 of Tusiane’s discourse which contains Tim’s second quotation from Methodius. Before quoting directly from the discourse, let me repeat the quotation as Tim has it on page 69.

For I also, taking my journey, and going forth from the Egypt of this life, ... celebrate with Christ the millennium of rest, which is called 'the seventh day,' even 'the true Sabbath.' (69)

What does not come through sufficiently clear in Tim's book is that Methodius is speaking of the "*millennium of rest*" or the resurrection as an **intermediate state** between "*the Egypt of this life*" and the **final day** of the Feast of Tabernacles when we shall enter a completely different mode of existence, symbolized by "*the Promised Land*" and "*the spiritual eighth day*." In the figure, the Jews left Egypt thus symbolizing death. Then they celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles in the wilderness thus symbolizing the resurrection and the millennium. Then they entered the Promised Land which symbolizes something altogether new which Tusiane now explains.

Wherefore, above all other things, I say to those who love contests, and who are strong-minded, that without delay they should honour chastity, as a thing the most useful and glorious. For in the new and indissoluble creation, whoever shall not be found decorated with the boughs of chastity, shall neither obtain rest, because he has not fulfilled the command of God according to the law, nor shall he enter into the land of promise, because he has not previously celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles. *Banquet, Discourse IX, Tusiane, Chapter 5*

Note the sequence. The "*new and indissoluble creation*" refers to the resurrection. Anyone who comes to the first day of that state but is not found by the judgment to be chaste, will not obtain rest and will not be allowed to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. Then, **after** the seven day Feast of Tabernacles, it will be time to enter the **Land of Promise**. But those who were not chaste are excluded from this as well. Tusiane continues.

For they only who have celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles come to the Holy Land, setting out from those dwellings which are called tabernacles, until they come to enter into the temple and city of God, advancing to a greater and more glorious joy, as the Jewish types indicate. For like as the Israelites, having left the borders of Egypt, first came to the Tabernacles, and from hence, having again set forth, came into the land of promise, so also do we. *Banquet, Discourse IX, Tusiane, Chapter 5*

In the figure, when it was time to enter the Promised Land, the Jews left the tabernacles. Now Tusiane is explaining that at the end of the true Feast of Tabernacles, **we will leave our resurrection bodies** to enter "*a greater and more glorious joy*." This brings us to Tim's quotation and it is apparent that he did not understand what Methodius was teaching. The portion which Tim quotes is again in *italics*.

For I also, taking my journey, and going forth from the Egypt of this life, came first to the resurrection, which is the true Feast of the Tabernacles, and there having

set up my tabernacle, adorned with the fruits of virtue, on the first day of the resurrection, which is the day of judgment, *celebrate with Christ the millennium of rest, which is called the seventh day, even the true Sabbath*. Then again from thence I, a follower of Jesus, “who hath entered into the heavens,” as they also, after the rest of the Feast of Tabernacles, came into the land of promise, come into the heavens, not continuing to remain in tabernacles—that is, my body not remaining as it was before, but, after the space of a thousand years, changed from a human and corruptible form into angelic size and beauty, where at last we virgins, when the festival of the resurrection is consummated, shall pass from the wonderful place of the tabernacle to greater and better things, ascending into the very house of God above the heavens, as, says the Psalmist, “in the voice of praise and thanksgiving, among such as keep holy day.” *Banquet, Discourse IX, Tusiane*, Chapter 5

So this is Methodius’ chiliasm and it agrees perfectly with Barnabas. There are six thousand years followed by the resurrection and the seventh millennium which is the true Sabbath and the Feast of Tabernacles. This state of existence will continue for 1,000 years. Then begins the spiritual eighth day in which we will shed our physical, resurrected bodies and be transformed “*from a human and corruptible form into angelic size and beauty*.” Methodius believed in the resurrection of the flesh in contrast to Origen. But he also considered the resurrection to be only an intermediate state waiting for “*greater and better things*” when we will be freed even from the resurrected body and finally “*ascend into the very house of God above the heavens*.” In Methodius’ eschatology, our bodies go through three states: (1) earthly, (2) resurrected, (3) transformed.

Alexander of Alexandria (Alexandria, 313-326): Alexander was the last of the Alexandrian bishops prior to the Nicene Council. He is primarily known for combatting Arianism. Although he wrote nothing regarding eschatology, his prominence in Alexandria virtually assures that he was amillennial.

***Lactantius (Gaul, 315-325):** Lactantius is the last writer in the series. He flourished during the last of the persecutions and saw the conversion of Emperor Constantine and the beginning of the new era in which the church was favored. It was Emperor Constantine who ended the persecution and ultimately convened the Nicene Council the same year (325) that Lactantius died.

Of all the writers we have surveyed, none have written as extensively nor in as great detail about the time of the end as Lactantius. He was a chiliast. Although he almost never quotes the Scriptures,¹³⁷ he offers detailed descriptions of the end of the age, the time of Tribulation, the Antichrist and the false prophet, the Battle of Armageddon, the

¹³⁷ He instead quotes the Greek poets and philosophers. And he quotes the Sibylline Oracles extensively as authoritative.

return of Christ, the resurrection, the binding of Satan, the judgments and the millennial reign of Christ. Several points are worth highlighting.

Lactantius writes extensively about the immortality of the soul. A majority of the ECFs, even in the first century, believed in the immortality of the soul, but it is worth mentioning with respect to Lactantius because he stresses it so frequently and draws numerous conclusions based on it. It is one of his major themes.

Regarding the first resurrection of the believers and the Judgment Seat of Christ, Lactantius taught a legalistic scale of justice.

Not all men, however, shall then be judged by God, but those only who have been exercised in the religion of God. For they who have not known God, since sentence cannot be passed upon them for their acquittal, are already judged and condemned, since the Holy Scriptures testify that the wicked shall not arise to judgment. Therefore they who have known God shall be judged, and their deeds, that is, their evil works, shall be compared and weighed against their good ones: so that if those which are good and just are more and weighty, they may be given to a life of blessedness; but if the evil exceed, they may be condemned to punishment. Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes*, Book VII, Chapter 20

Such a view of the judgment leaves few of us with any hope and is a great departure from the grace expressed so eloquently by earlier writers.

Like Methodius before him, Lactantius teaches that there will be a second transformation of our resurrected bodies at the *end* of the millennium into a different mode of existence. This reflects the original influence of Barnabas' eighth day and of Methodius' elaboration on it. He makes an explicit distinction between the 1,000 year kingdom and the kingdom that has no end. He writes,

But when the thousand years shall be completed, the world shall be renewed by God, and the heavens shall be folded together, and the earth shall be changed, and God shall transform men into the similitude of angels, and they shall be white as snow; and they shall always be employed in the sight of the Almighty, and shall make offerings to their Lord, and serve Him for ever. Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, Book VII, Chapter 26

After these things¹³⁸ God will renew the world, and transform the righteous into the forms of angels, that, being presented with the garment of immortality, they may serve God for ever; and this will be the kingdom of God, which shall have no end. Then also the wicked shall rise again, not to life but to punishment; for God shall raise these also, when the second resurrection takes place, that, being condemned to eternal torments and delivered to eternal fires, they may suffer the

¹³⁸ That is, at the end of the Millennial Kingdom

punishments which they deserve for their crimes. Lactantius, *Epitome of the Divine Institutes*, Chapter 72

The following specific features of Lactantius' chiliasm are noteworthy.

Having proved the immortality of the soul, it remains to teach by whom, and to whom, and in what manner, and at what time, it is given. Since fixed and divinely appointed times have begun to be filled up, a destruction and consummation of all things must of necessity take place, that the world may be renewed by God. But that time is at hand, as far as may be collected from the number of years, and from the signs which are foretold by the prophets. But since the things which have been spoken concerning the end of the world and the conclusion of the times are innumerable, those very things which are spoken are to be laid down without adornment, since it would be a boundless task to bring forward the testimonies. If any one wishes for them, or does not place full confidence in us, let him approach to the very shrine of the heavenly letters, and being more fully instructed through their trustworthiness, let him perceive that the philosophers have erred, who thought either that this world was eternal, or that there would be numberless thousands of years from the time when it was prepared. For six thousand years have not yet been completed, and when this number shall be made up, then at length all evil will be taken away, that justice alone may reign. And how this will come to pass, I will explain in few words. Lactantius, *Epitome of the Divine Institutes*, Chapter 70

Observe that Lactantius regarded the time of the end to be "*at hand, as far as may be collected from the number of years, and from the signs which are foretold by the prophets.*" What he meant by this is declared with more specificity in another place.

Perhaps some one may now ask when these things of which we have spoken are about to come to pass? I have already shown above, that when six thousand years shall be completed this change must take place, and that the last day of the extreme conclusion is now drawing near. It is permitted us to know respecting the signs, which are spoken by the prophets, for they foretold signs by which the consummation of the times is to be expected by us from day to day, and to be feared. When, however, this amount will be completed, those teach, who have written respecting the times, collecting them from the sacred writings and from various histories, how great is the number of years from the beginning of the world. And although they vary, and the amount of the number as reckoned by them differs considerably, yet all expectation does not exceed the limit of two hundred years. Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, Book VII, Chapter 25

Lactantius makes a distinction between what can be known with certainty and what cannot. "*It is permitted us to know respecting the signs, which are spoken by the prophets, for they foretold signs...*" But regarding when the 6,000th year would arrive, he expressed uncertainty, because the answers given by those who were working at

calculating it “*varies, and the amount of the number as reckoned by them differs considerably.*” In any case, he considered that “*all expectation does not exceed the limit of two hundred years.*” We can infer at least three things from this.

- (1) Chiliasm was alive and well in Lactantius’ day, despite opposition from many.
- (2) There were many in Lactantius’ day who were working diligently to calculate the time of the end.
- (3) Among chiliasts, excitement was growing as the predicted time of the end was drawing near.

One more thing regarding Lactantius’ chiliasm is noteworthy. It is his attitude regarding the Roman Empire. Continuing from the previous quotation, he writes,

The subject itself declares that the fall and ruin of the world will shortly take place; except that while the city of Rome remains it appears that nothing of this kind is to be feared. But when that capital of the world shall have fallen, and shall have begun to be a street, which the Sibyls say shall come to pass, who can doubt that the end has now arrived to the affairs of men and the whole world? It is that city, that only, which still sustains all things; and the God of heaven is to be entreated by us and implored — if, indeed, His arrangements and decrees can be delayed — lest, sooner than we think for, that detestable tyrant should come who will undertake so great a deed, and dig out that eye, by the destruction of which the world itself is about to fall. Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, Book VII, Chapter 25

Whereas earlier chiliasts had viewed Rome negatively, as the evil fourth empire in Daniel, Lactantius has nothing but admiration for Rome and views Rome positively. This is undoubtedly due to the changes brought by Constantine. The lesson and warning to be drawn from this is that we are all too easily swayed in our interpretations of prophecy by current events.

Summary of Fourth Century: Since we are only concerned with the first two decades of the fourth century prior to the Nicene Council, there were only eight authors to consider. Two of these were chiliasts (Methodius and Lactantius). Four were amillennialists. The remaining two did not write anything from which their eschatology can be discerned. There was no trace left of the primitive eschatology or of the primitive hope. Among the chiliasts, there was a sense of anticipation as the calculated time (A.D. 500) for the return of Christ was not too far distant.

§D7: Anastasius of Sinai provides an important insight into the state of chiliasm in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries. He is faithful to the original spirit of Barnabas. Tim’s quotations of him are evaluated in context.

We have now finished the examination of all of the existing ante-Nicene writings. But before calling this survey complete, it is expedient to consider the contribution of Anastasius of Sinai. He is of interest to this survey for at least three reasons. First, Tim quotes him twice as evidence that Clement of Rome, Justin Martyr, and Papias were chiliasts. Those quotations should be evaluated in context. The second reason is that Anastasius quotes or refers to numerous fathers of the ante-Nicene period. The third reason is that he allows us to answer the question: What became of chiliasm after the end of the fourth century when the 6,000th year came and passed and Christ did not return?

Anastasius wrote during the end of the 7th and beginning of the 8th centuries. This period is well within what are known as the “early middle ages,” sometimes also called “the dark ages.”¹³⁹ As it turns out, chiliasm did not disappear. Anastasius kept the candle burning. He was a chiliast but he modified chiliasm as exemplified in his *Hexaemeron*. “Hexaemeron” means “six days” and this book is Anastasius’ commentary on the creation week.¹⁴⁰ Before explaining Anastasius’ innovation, it will be helpful to take a quick glimpse into Anastasius’ theology and methods in this work. He covers a vast range of topics, but because the work is so long, only a few tidbits can be sampled to give the flavor.

Secular Science

Anastasius repudiated secular science referring to it as “mathematical and random.” This is one of the many reasons this period is aptly known as the “dark ages.” Anastasius rejoiced that,

“The church has been rescued from these endeavors, as from a thoroughly devastating disaster, by the Word, which dwells in all and is true. For if the Church discovered every movement of the sun and moon and heaven and earth and winds and stars – what gain would it enjoy, except only a transient and deceptive glory?” Book 1, I.4

The Two Creations

To Anastasius, secular science was useless. There was no reason for the church to engage in scientific inquiry or any other kind of inquiry.

Instead, the Church listens. And it learns that two creations arose from God, the maker of all. In the one, he brought forth simply the existence of human kind and

¹³⁹ Most modern historians no longer use the term “dark ages” because it has negative or pejorative connotations. I believe it is an accurate term because this age was indeed very dark, marred by violence, ignorance, and superstition and ruled by ruthless autocrats, both secular and ecclesiastical.

¹⁴⁰ The *Hexaemeron* is actually twelve books comprising 487 pages in the Greek and English text published by the Pontificio Istituto Orientale in 2007.

all creation. In the other, he brought forth the good existence. The latter happened for human beings and all creation when God became incarnate. Then all were freed from corruption and received the good existence. Book 1, II.1

The “two creations” are the physical and the spiritual. The physical creation is plain in the text of Genesis. The second creation is also found in the very same text, but can only be understood when one looks beyond the literal sense.

And while writing about creation’s emergence into existence, he also put down in the very same text its renovation through Christ into the good existence, which he did in a style that was prophetic, recondite, and allegorical. Indeed, God in his wisdom prepared all things in the heavens and on earth as a type and sketch of the new existence. Book 1, II.1

This new creation, or good existence, is the church as Anastasius eventually states plainly. He then proceeds for almost 500 pages to explain every word in Genesis 1-3 (as well as numerous other passages of the Old Testament) as allegorical types and figures of Christ and the Church.

Anastasius’ Method

Anastasius thinks his use of allegory is obviously correct and that he has precedent for it in Paul and some of the fathers. But he is disappointed in others of the fathers who took the Scriptures too literally and failed to perceive the allegorical truth. Anastasius especially admires the fathers of the Alexandrian school who specialized in allegorical interpretation. He singles out Ammonius as “*the most highly approved exegete of Alexandria.*”

For this reason Cyril the Great, who adorned the Church with his divine reflections, said in his commentaries to Genesis that throughout all of the Mosaic passage about the six-day creation, the mystery of Christ and the Church was proclaimed. And Ammonius, the most highly approved exegete of Alexandria, took this as his inspiration. Guided by Cyril, he put together a collection of patristic comments on the six-day creation and said that most commentators had limited the meaning of the divinely inspired Scripture, since they had not perceived it as a type of the Church. Thus they had not been serving God, but had been slaves to the literal meaning alone. And this was the reason why – the same Ammonius said – there was a lack of harmony between some exegetes and others.

Indeed, if all creation arose for man, and Paul raises Adam and Eve to Christ and the Church when he says: *This mystery is great, but I am speaking about Christ and the Church*, then he is saying, undeniably, that all creation, having arisen for man and his mate, refers to Christ and his Church. Book 1, II.4

This was Anastasius' justification for his allegorical innovations. He has to repeat it frequently because his allegory knows no bounds. For his insights, he uses two sources: (1) the supernatural gift of spiritual understanding he has received from Christ, and (2) the earlier church fathers. He writes,

We – and anyone who thinks clearly – cannot deny that the present subject is beyond our powers. Yet it gives birth to great pride in the Church. And each one receives weapons greater than the Scripture alone against the enemies of piety, who are now besieging the Church. Therefore, for his spouse the Church I make my appeal to Christ the light-giver who graciously elucidates his gifts... And as I boldly enter this sea here, which has been impassable for many, I will consult Christ first and then our holy Fathers as helpers, who sought to explain these things before. Book I, III.1

This brings us to one of the two quotations from Tim.¹⁴¹ Tim is offering this as proof that Papias was a chiliast and this quotation constitutes the entirety of his proof. Here is how it is quoted by Tim.

Taking occasion from Papias of Hierapolis, the illustrious, a disciple of the apostle who leaned on the bosom of Christ, and Clemens, and Pantænus... of the Alexandrians, and the wise Ammonius, the ancient and first expositors [of Scripture], who agreed with each other, who understood the work of the six days as referring to Christ and the whole Church. (64)

Tim concludes from this quotation that Papias was a chiliast because of the last clause linking *“the work of the six days as referring to Christ and the whole Church.”* Since Papias most likely knew of Barnabas' prophecy, it is possible that he accepted it and became a chiliast. But this quotation does not prove that. Tim takes this as a reference to the Millennial Week, but there are two problems with that. The first is that it simply doesn't say anything about the Millennial Week. The second is that this opinion is attributed to a list of four fathers, three of whom were associated with the Alexandrian school. Anastasius was not appealing to these fathers for their chiliasm; he was appealing to them for their use of allegorical interpretation. This becomes clear when the quotation is read in context. Here is the full quotation in Kuehn's translation:

We love and praise with all our might all the interpretations from the famous commentators. But some of us still become puzzled, indeed very puzzled, when facing the underlying problems. So we take heart from the mouth of the Holy Spirit: I mean the tongue of Paul, which said that everything in the Law was written beforehand as a type of Christ and his Church. And we receive momentum (since one ought to speak honestly) and we speak in harmony with

¹⁴¹ This is actually the second of Tim's quotations but it occurs earlier in the Hexaemeron, so I will look at it first.

Papias the Great from Hierapolis, who visited St. John,¹⁴² Clement,¹⁴³ Pantaenus the Alexandrian priest, and the very wise Ammonius. These were the exegetes of old, who wrote before the Councils. They thought that all the six-day creation referred to Christ and the Church. And so, with our thoughts on the Church of Christ, we look without hesitation past the literal, the unconcealed, the perceptible creation. In fact, the whole goal of our efforts is to help this Church: we have set ourselves down to this task for it... And let us ask Wisdom above – who gives to all according to how gracefully they ask – to reveal to us the meaning secretly inside the literal narrative. How did she prepare and stamp beforehand throughout the six-day creation the type and image of the Church of Christ? Book I, IV.1 and IV.3

Let us now look at the second quotation Tim provides. This one is intended to prove that Clement of Rome and Justin were chiliasts. Tim quotes as follows,

And the fact that it was not said of the seventh day equally with the other days, “And there was evening, and there was morning,” is a distinct indication of the consummation which is to take place in it before it is finished, as the fathers declare, especially St. Clement, and Irenæus, and Justin the martyr and philosopher. Anastasius of Sinai, *Hexaemeron*, (Quoted in Schaff, *The Fragments of Justin Martyr*, Fragment XV)

This quotation constitutes the entirety of Tim’s evidence that Clement of Rome and Justin taught the Millennial Week. There are at least two problems with Tim’s use of this quote.

Problem 1: A Defective Translation

Tim is not to be blamed for this first problem. The translation of this passage in Schaff which Tim is using is imprecise. Schaff has, “*as the fathers declare, especially St. Clement, and Irenæus, and Justin the martyr and philosopher.*” The correct translation should be, “...*that is what the fathers say, especially those around Saint Clement and Irenaeus and Justin the martyr and philosopher.*” This is indisputable. The Greek reads,

ὥς φασιν οἱ πατέρες καὶ μάλιστα οἱ περὶ τὸν ἱερὸν Κλήμεντα καὶ Εἰρηναῖον καὶ Ἰουστῖνον τὸν μάρτυρα καὶ φιλόσοφον...

Thus, rather than attributing this interpretation to any fathers in particular, Anastasius was bracketing the interpretation by its time, the time being the years around Clement, Irenaeus, and Justin. This would be the late second century.

Problem 2: The Content of the Quote and Anastasius’ Interpretation

¹⁴² The Greek reads, Παπίου τοῦ πάνου τοῦ ἱεραπολίτου τοῦ τῷ ἐπιστηθίῳ φοιτήσαντος which means, “Papius the Great of Hierapolis, who learned from the one who leaned on the breast.”

¹⁴³ Of Alexandria

The second problem with this quotation is that the content of what Anastasius was declaring is not something Tim would accept.

First, Anastasius was a chiliast, to be sure. But he lived more than 200 years after earlier chiliasts had predicted the return of Christ at the end of the 6,000th year. Anastasius believed he was well within the seventh day. In context, the specific point that he was making was that the consummation (the return of Christ) would take place within (before then end of) the seventh day. He is saying that this is implied by the fact that the phrase, “*and there was evening and there was morning*” is missing from the Genesis account of the seventh day unlike the other six days. Moreover, he is claiming that this was the interpretation of the fathers, especially those around the time of Clement, Irenaeus, and Justin.

In addition to this, Tim’s quotation is broken off in mid-sentence.¹⁴⁴ Anastasius continues, now making specific reference to something supposedly written by Justin.

“... The latter (Justin) makes note, in a way that is exceedingly wise, of the number six of the sixth day, i.e. the intelligent soul of man and his five senses of perception; for he is explaining the six works of the sixth day. And having gone through many things about the number six in detail, he then says that all things created by God were divisible into six categories. More specifically: into the noetic and immortal (who are the angels); the rational mortals (who are men); those that have senses but are without reasons (which are the cattle, birds, and fish); those that change places and move about, but are without sense perception (which are the winds, clouds, waters, and stars); those that do not change places, but increase (which are the trees); and senseless things that do not change places (which are the mountains and the earth and such). Everything created by God in heaven and on earth is comprehended by these six categories and belongs to one of them.” Anastasius of Sinai, *Hexaemeron*, Book 7a, III.1

What Anastasius attributes to Justin in this passage is a purely allegorical interpretation of the creation week. This interpretation is consistent with Anastasius’ overall purpose in the *Hexaemeron*, but is not found in any of the known writings of Justin and it is not something that Tim would accept. Therefore, even if Anastasius was correct in attributing this statement to Justin (because he had possession of some of Justin’s writings which have been lost), then Tim’s intended purpose in using this quotation is still invalid because he doesn’t include the context and he ignores specific points that Anastasius was making.

Problem 3: The Identity of Clement

¹⁴⁴ There is nothing wrong with truncating quotations, unless doing so alters the sense.

There are several patristic writers named “Clement.” Tim assumes that the Clement to whom Anastasius was referring was Clement of Rome. Since Clement of Rome was the companion of Paul the Apostle, it follows that if Anastasius had meant him, he could have named Paul or the apostles in general in order to bracket the time of this interpretation. Clearly, he was referring to a later time which included Irenaeus and Justin. This makes it easy to determine which Clement Anastasius had in mind. It was Clement of Alexandria. All three fathers (Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus, and Justin) wrote during the latter half of the second century.

Fortunately, Anastasius quotes Clement six times. When all six quotations are considered, it becomes evident that Anastasius was referring to Clement of Alexandria, the president of the Alexandrian school. Pantaenus was the founder of the Alexandrian school. Ammonius was also of Alexandria, a contemporary of Clement, and the teacher of Origen. Eusebius described Ammonius as a man who “*had attained the greatest proficiency in philosophy of any in our day.*”¹⁴⁵ These three fathers are all renown for their allegorical interpretation and for blending Christian teaching with Greek philosophy. The following quotations will establish without question to which Clement Anastasius referred.

You can hear it, can you not? The divine inspiration, just like a divine nature, entered Adam’s earth-born body; and immediately afterwards, Scripture did not address God with a simple name. It named him in a compound way, our Lord and God, as if addressing Christ, who is a compound. This is exactly how we found it, after we had investigated with considerable care the most ancient, authentic, and accurate texts among the various editions: the texts by Clement, Irenaeus, Philo the philosopher, and the compiler of the annotated Hexapla. According to these, being simply God, he created the six-day creation. But after that, having become a compound, the Lord and God – which was God and man, Christ Jesus – created the new creation. Book 7b, III.3

With these considerations in mind, most of the exegetes – especially the older ones, the original ones – avoided saying that the garden and the two trees in its midst – of life and understanding – were tangible. Thus they were not compelled to make the beasts and cattle participants in the tree of life and the tree of understanding. For God did not distinguish between the food of Adam and the food of irrational creatures. He gave them every tree that bears fruit and seed as food in common. Thus they in the school of Clement and in the schools of the original exegetes that lived around his time said that if the things of Paradise and the two trees in its midst had been tangible, then one must conclude that the beasts and reptiles were more important than man, for they were not forbidden any meal or any tree and fruit. Book 7b, V.2

¹⁴⁵ Eusebius, Church History, Book V, Chapter 19

Surely then, you must think of the Law of God in a spiritual way. The Law is spiritual, exclaimed Paul, for the letter kills. And so that the letter might not destroy us, let us learn to discern with our spiritual senses (where it is necessary) the spiritual texts spoken to us spiritually by the Holy Spirit. In these texts, the mystery especially about the garden of Paradise is great, exceptional, and very secret. Book 7b. V.4

The things of the garden refer to the Church of Christ. This was the conclusion by the earliest exegetes of the Church, who considered these passages in a spiritual way. Specifically, I mean Philo the philosopher, who was a contemporary of the apostles; the great Papias of Hierapolis, a disciple of John the Evangelist; Irenaeus of Lyon; Justin, the philosopher and martyr; Pantaenus of Alexandria; Clement, the author of the Stromata; and their followers. And among these were also the two Gregorys of Cappadocia, who were very wise in many things. Book 7b, V.5

Anastasius' Chiliasm

In order to bring this to a completion, there remains only one point, that of explaining in what sense Anastasius was a chiliast. Anastasius was true to the original spirit and all three points of Barnabas' chiliasm.

Anastasius believed in the Millennial Week and further developed the concept attempting to find historical corollaries to the six days of creation. For example, the first three days symbolically represent the first three arrangements in the first three thousand years. In the first arrangement (first thousand years), Adam was given a glimmer of understanding (φῶς ἀμυδρὸν γνώσεως). This ended with the great flood. In the second arrangement, God gave a covenant to Noah. On the third day, God gave the ordinance on Mount Sinai. But the sun, moon, and stars were not created until Day Four. Thus, during those first three days (or three thousand years), the first three ways of life were imperfect. On the fourth day, God created the great lights and this represented the creation of the church, and with the church, perfection.

But all of these were imperfect. The deep shadow of impiety still governed, nocturnal and gloomy, before the multitude of apostles and teachers began to shine. I am talking about the stars shining down upon the earth. This was before the sun of the righteousness of Christ dawned, with the moon of the Church as his bride. On account of this, before the fourth day, God made three days that were imperfect: without sun and without moon. Book 4, II.2

We pointed out earlier that the fourth millennium, the fourth day of time, is in harmony with the fourth day of the six-day creation. So too we will show, in due time, how the remaining days are in agreement with the millennia that are their equals in number – if God gives us something to say when we open our mouths! Book 4, XI.2

Anastasius agreed with Barnabas' rejection of all things Jewish and the allegorizing of the promises to the patriarchs. This theme is in fact the entire purpose of his composing the *Hexaemeron*. Anastasius also agreed with Barnabas that the physical creation would cease to exist and be replaced by a new mode of existence in the eternal state.

Since Anastasius believed that he was living within the seventh day and Christ had not yet returned, he invented a clever explanation to salvage chiliasm. In simplest terms, he said that the consummation would take place *during* the seventh day, rather than exactly on the 6,000th year. He appealed to the parable of the ten virgins to explain that the consummation might take place in the 6,250th year. It is no coincidence that this theory would have made the return of Christ take place during Anastasius' lifetime. He wrote,

This discussion has now arrived at things pertaining to the pause and consummation on the seventh day. It is therefore not unreasonable that we bring forward some of Christ's statements, which we have mentioned concerning the consummation.

He said, in the parable of the ten virgins, that he himself would come from heaven like a bridegroom in the middle of the night. Midnight is counted as one fourth of the full period of night and day, for Scripture says: *Evening came and dawn came, one day*. But the Lord's day is one thousand years long. So midnight of the present seventh day is the two hundred and fiftieth year. Book 7, II.1

Anastasius went on to acknowledge that he could be mistaken and that God alone, "*the creator of time and all things, knows for sure the real termination and boundary of the age.*"

Summary of Ante-Nicene Eschatology

I have surveyed to the best of my ability all of the Ante-Nicene fathers with two goals in mind. Primarily, I wanted a detailed, historically accurate account of ECF eschatology, what each father believed and contributed, and how their eschatology evolved over time. Secondly, I looked for evidence to either corroborate or contradict the statements Tim made about these writings. My only agenda was truth. In summary, this is what I discovered.

- There was a primitive (pristine) eschatology that was universally believed and taught, but it was not chiliasm. It was characterized by a belief in the great tribulation and the post-tribulation return of Christ; the resurrection of the flesh to immortality; the eternal reign and dominion of Christ on earth over the nations in a kingdom that will have no end; the eternal inheritance of the earth in fulfillment of the promises; and the expectation that these events could happen in any generation, and therefore

perpetual watchfulness were required. I have termed this the “primitive eschatology” and discussed it in Subsection §D1.

- Chiliasm entered the church as a personal prophecy of “Barnabas” in the years 130-132. Prior to Barnabas, chiliasm was unknown in the church. The original features of this prophecy were the following: (1) the allegorical interpretation of the creation week, meaning there will be six millennia followed by the return of Christ and the Millennial Sabbath; (2) the rejection of all things Jewish, meaning all of the promises to the patriarchs are now being fulfilled in the church; and (3) the spiritual eighth day, meaning the Sabbath will end after the seventh millennium followed by a new mode of existence. Although Barnabas did not elaborate on this eighth day, later chiliasts did. The *sine qua non* of chiliasm is the Millennial Week.
- Barnabas’ prophecy fractured the original primitive eschatology into three competing systems: historic premillennialism, amillennialism, and chiliasm proper. Within 200 years, the primitive eschatology and its pristine hope had disappeared.
- There were only eight chiliasts among the Ante-Nicene fathers. In chronological order, they were Barnabas, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Commodianus, Cyprian, Victorinus, Methodius, and Lactantius.
 - **Barnabas** was the original source and archetype of Christian chiliasm. He considered himself a great prophet and explicitly wrote that God had revealed this doctrine to him. On further investigation, it becomes clear that he borrowed virtually every point of his prophecy from Jewish mythology and mysticism, yet the system he invented was strongly anti-Jewish.
 - **Irenaeus** was the first father to embrace the Millennial Week after Barnabas using the same allegorical method. Irenaeus attempted to harmonize the Millennial Week with a literal fulfillment of the covenantal promises during the seventh millennium in a kingdom with finite duration. After the end of the kingdom, Irenaeus filled in many details of the eternal state which Barnabas had left undefined. Irenaeus taught that in the eternal state, the righteous would have their destiny in one of three places: (1) Heaven; (2) Paradise; or (3) the New Jerusalem.
 - **Hippolytus** expanded on Irenaeus’ allegorism. He found “types and emblems of spiritual mysteries” for the Millennial Week in the dimensions of the ark, the time of day of Christ’s suffering, the length of the kingdoms of the Persians and Greeks etc. Hippolytus and Irenaeus were the only two chiliasts who made any connection between the Millennial Kingdom and the fulfillment of the promises to the patriarchs.
 - **Commodianus** adduced numerous fantastic ideas to his eschatology such as the existence of a race of Israelites who are now living and being hidden by God somewhere in Persia who will constitute Christ’s army when He returns to destroy the Antichrist.

- **Cyprian** stretched the allegorical reach of earlier chiliasts still further. His specialty was interpreting every reference to the number seven in Scripture as a mystical reference to the Millennial Week including the seven Maccabees, seven spirits, seven angels, seven-branched lamp, seven golden candlesticks, seven columns in Proverbs, seven churches, the barren woman who bore seven children, the seven women laying hold on one man in Isaiah, Paul's seven epistles, etc. Cyprian's hope, like that of earlier chiliasts, was not the earthly kingdom of Christ; his hope was a heavenly destiny.
 - **Victorinus**, in the original spirit of Barnabas, despised all things Jewish. He defended chiliasm using pure allegory. He borrowed and expanded on Cyprian's use of the number seven adding seven torches, seven young sheep, seven deacons, seven trumpets, seven seals, seven weeks, seven clean animals in the ark, and several others. He also expanded on the spiritual eighth day following the Millennial Sabbath.
 - **Methodius** took allegorical and mystical interpretation to the same extremes as did Clement of Alexandria and Origin. His theology borders so closely on Gnosticism that we are left wondering whether any difference exists. There is no room in his theology for an earthly, physical kingdom situated on this physical world. The kingdom he longs for is to escape "this alien world," to be set free from the resurrected physical body, and to finally fly upward as a pure spirit to heaven on the spiritual eighth day.
 - **Lactantius** was the last of the ante-Nicene chiliasts. Exactly like Methodius, he taught that there will be a second transformation of our resurrected bodies at the end of the millennium into a different, non-physical mode of existence on the spiritual eighth day.
- All of the chiliasts used allegorical interpretation to teach and defend the Millennial Week. They each progressively outperformed their predecessors in this method of interpretation. None of them claimed apostolic authority for it.
 - All of the chiliasts without exception believed in some kind of heavenly destiny. This point evolved. Irenaeus believed the most fruitful disciples would ascend into Heaven in their resurrected bodies just like Christ. Later chiliasts explicitly taught that with the end of the kingdom, at the beginning of the eighth day, we will leave our physical / resurrected bodies, or that they will be "transformed" into a new, spiritual mode of existence in the new creation.
 - These findings contradict Tim's claims about early Christian eschatology on a fundamental level.

Part II

Historical Evidence

Section E

Primacy of the Septuagint

Introduction

The assertion of Chapter 7 of *Time of the End* is that the Millennial Week doctrine fell out of favor in the sixth century when the expectation of Christ's return did not materialize. It had been predicted by some chiliasts¹⁴⁶ that the second coming would take place in 500 A.D. based on their calculation of when the 6000th year would arrive. Tim proposes that the failure of those early chiliasts was not due to any error in the doctrinal assumptions or the methodology of chiliasm, but rather to the faulty chronological data in the Septuagint (LXX) they were using. Tim maintains that "the Hebrew Bible" contains the correct data but that this was inaccessible to the early chiliasts because of their ignorance of Hebrew. He theorizes that if the early chiliasts had used the correct text, their calculations would have been correct. In later chapters Tim develops his own chronology based on the Hebrew Masoretic Text (MT) to arrive at his projected date for the return of Christ.¹⁴⁷ There is compelling evidence,¹⁴⁸ however, that the LXX does in fact contain the correct data. The ECFs were aware of the competing chronological data in the Hebrew texts. The reason they did not use it was not due to their ignorance of it; it was because they considered it to be corrupt.

§E1. Tim argues that the LXX is corrupt and the Hebrew Bible is correct. "The Hebrew Bible" and the Masoretic Text are not equivalent terms. He suggests that the ECFs were ignorant of the alternate chronological data.

Tim repeats this thesis regarding the Hebrew Bible and the LXX several times throughout the book. He writes here in Chapter 7,

There were several early Christian attempts to develop a chronology of the Bible in order to pinpoint where they were on the Millennial Week timeline. Yet, they all used the Greek Septuagint for their chronological data, since the Hebrew text was not readily available to them, and they would have to rely on unbelieving Jews to explain it to them since they did not speak or read Hebrew. (183)

Again he writes,

¹⁴⁶ This was the opinion of Hippolytus.

¹⁴⁷ October 1, 2036

¹⁴⁸ The evidence I am presenting is a summary of the research of others. I will provide a bibliography at the end of this review.

A few early chiliasts made attempts to develop a complete chronology to pinpoint the time when the Kingdom would arrive. Yet, they all failed because of their reliance on the Greek Old Testament which does not contain the accurate chronological data. We now turn our attention to establishing a complete chronology from the Hebrew Bible alone. If this chronology is accurate, and if we can link it with the modern Gregorian calendar, it will pinpoint the year of Christ's return. (225)

And again,

Most of the chronological data is the same in the Hebrew text and the LXX for the periods of time after Abraham. However, the chronological data in the LXX was intentionally corrupted by the Jewish translators for the period from creation to Abraham. These genealogies were systematically lengthened by 100 years per generation in the Septuagint. About three-fourths of the generations from Adam to Abraham were lengthened by a century each in the LXX. This makes any chronology based on the Greek Old Testament about 1500 years too long! Consequently, the early Christians who attempted chronologies from the Septuagint concluded that the sixth millennium was almost completed in their day. (183)

Tim states that his chronology will be derived exclusively from “the Hebrew Bible,” but when he says “the Hebrew Bible,” he means the Masoretic Text (MT). The original text of the Hebrew Bible¹⁴⁹ is technically referred to as the *Vorlage*.¹⁵⁰ Everyone, including Tim, agrees that the accurate chronological data is contained in this original Hebrew Bible, but it is a mistake to assume that the MT is identical to the *Vorlage*. No copies of the *Vorlage* exist; what we have are “witnesses” to the *Vorlage*. “Witnesses” consist of hand-copied Biblical scrolls and manuscripts, translations, and quotations in Jewish and Christian literature.¹⁵¹

There are three primary witnesses. The LXX was translated directly from the *Vorlage* in the third century BC, making it the oldest witness to the *Vorlage*. The Samaritan Pentateuch¹⁵² (SP) – which has a complicated textual history including multiple revisions – dates to approximately 122 BC making it the second oldest witness. The Masoretic Text (MT) tradition dates to the 7th century A.D.; however, a proto-Masoretic text was produced in the early second century A.D. when Rabbinic Judaism was struggling to recover from the destruction of the Temple. It may be presumed that what is now known as the MT is a reliable preservation of this second century proto-Masoretic text. This makes the MT the most recent of the three primary witnesses.

¹⁴⁹ The Bible that was preserved in the Temple throughout the Second Temple period until 70 A.D.

¹⁵⁰ German for “prototype.” This is the term used in technical literature and textual criticism of the Old Testament.

¹⁵¹ This is no different than what we have for the New Testament. The original autographs penned by the apostles no longer exist. What we have now are “witnesses” to those original autographs.

¹⁵² The Samaritan Pentateuch contains only the five books of Moses (the Torah).

In addition to the primary witness, there are numerous secondary witnesses. These include the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) and numerous works of Jewish (and even Christian) historians and authors that contain quotations of and references to the primary witnesses.

§E2. Discrepancies among the primary witnesses point to deliberate alteration of the dates – an unconscionable crime. Only two theories are possible to explain the discrepancies and each must be thoroughly and objectively evaluated.

The problem is that the chronological data in the three primary witnesses – the LXX, the MT, and SP – do not agree. Specifically, the age of each patriarch when his son was born (the “begetting ages”) is different. The data in the LXX are much longer than those in the MT. Furthermore, the data have been altered in a systematic pattern, proving that the change was deliberate and not due to accidental, random, scribal error.¹⁵³ Table 1 shows the data¹⁵⁴ as found in the LXX, SP, and MT.

The fact that the data in the LXX are much longer than the MT can only be explained by one of two hypotheses. Either the original chronology was long and someone deliberately shortened it (chronological deflation) or the original was short and someone deliberately lengthened it (chronological inflation). Either way, it is an unconscionable crime and the question is *who did it?*

Tim explicitly assumes chronological inflation and evidently does not consider the other hypothesis worthy of serious contemplation. This is easy to do in the current setting in which most evangelical Christians are unaware of the historical and theological framework of this question. Even in Bible schools and seminaries where the Hebrew Masoretic Text is treated as infallible, there is little or no awareness of any other opinion. But this lack of awareness is a recent perspective.

Even relatively minor questions of textual criticism in which the outcomes have little practical significance for faith and morals deserve to be handled with humility and caution commensurate with our reverence for the sacred text. In that spirit, when an author accuses scribes or translators of deliberately changing the text of Scripture, such an accusation must be backed up with compelling reasons and a theory that explains *means, motive, and opportunity* and that is capable of accounting for *ALL* of the evidence. That would be true even if the outcome had no practical implications for faith and morals. In the present case where the outcome is being used to predict the date of Christ’s return, we have an obligation to spare no effort in handling the evidence.

¹⁵³ Some textual criticism is necessary within each of the traditions due to truly unintentional scribal errors found in various manuscripts such as the begetting age of Methuselah in the LXX. See bibliography for this solution.

¹⁵⁴ Data is borrowed from *Bible and Spade* 29.2

Table 1. The Begetting Ages of Genesis 5 and 11 According to MT, LXX, and SP

	LXX	SP	MT
Adam	230	130	130
Seth	205	105	105
Enosh	190	90	90
Kenan	170	70	70
Mahalalel	165	65	65
Jared	162	62	162
Enoch	165	65	65
Methuselah	187	67	187
Lamech	188	53	182
Noah	500	500	500
Shem	100	100	100
Arpachshad	135	135	35
Cainan	130	-	-
Shelah	130	130	30
Eber	134	134	34
Peleg	130	130	30
Reu	132	132	32
Serug	130	130	30
Nahor	79	79	29
Terah	70 (130)	70	70 (130)
Total	3392	2247	2006

Tim's theory is that the translators of the LXX conspired with "the elite scribes and priests" to alter the chronology. Their *means* was to render the chronology into Greek secure that they would not be discovered because only the priests and scribes were capable of reading the source language – Hebrew. The *opportunity* was the invitation by Ptolemy II to translate the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. The *motive* was to throw off anyone who attempted to construct a chronology in order to hide the time of the arrival of the kingdom from the Gentiles and from the common Jewish people. Here is Tim's explanation.

It seems the Septuagint translators did not want to disturb the total life-spans of the patriarchs, having them live longer than one millennium. Yet, they clearly wanted to throw off anyone wishing to construct a chronology of the period. The Hebrew text gives a total for the period from Adam to Abraham as about 2000 years. Yet, the Septuagint gives a total of about 3400 years. Since this is the only real effect from this systematic alteration, it is logical to infer that the motive was to deny the reader a true chronology.

Why would the Jewish scribes who translated the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek intentionally alter the text? We should keep in mind that they were employed by Ptolemy, king of Egypt, to make this translation for his library in Alexandria. Perhaps they wanted to throw off any attempt at a chronology by a non-Jew, or even by the common Jewish people. The Hebrew language was fast becoming a dead language, used only by the elite scribes and priests by the time of Christ. The common people spoke Greek. Obscuring the chronological data could have been their way of keeping the prophecies of the time when the Kingdom would arrive out of reach of the secular authorities. While the Jews apparently did not know of the Millennial Week concept until after it was introduced by Christians, they developed other sophisticated chronological schemes which attempted to predict the exact year of the coming of Messiah and His Kingdom.

The early Christian chiliasts' reliance on the Greek Old Testament for their chronological data skewed their timelines by roughly 1400 years. And since most could not read Hebrew, but relied on the LXX exclusively, it is not surprising that their chronologies reflect the incorrect (longer) genealogies. So, they expected the end of the sixth millennium much closer to their own time. (188-189)

Tim's theory is novel. In contrast, from the earliest times Christians universally held to a different explanation for the discrepancy between the LXX and the MT. Until the Reformation, Christians believed that the rabbis altered the chronology after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The responsible parties were the Sanhedrin led by Rabbi Akiva ben Joseph (50-135 A.D.). At that time, Rabbinic Judaism was struggling for its survival, and most of the scrolls of the *Vorlage* had been destroyed along with Jerusalem and the Temple. The text urgently needed to be preserved and this crisis presented a unique *opportunity* to alter anything they wished to change with impunity. This opportunity had never before arisen and would never be repeated. The *means* was simple; they secretly created and standardized an altered Hebrew text which subsequently became the Masoretic Text tradition. This new Hebrew text was produced in the early second century. Their *motive* was to counter the use of the LXX by the Christians who were successfully using it to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah. It was not only the chronology that was altered by the Rabbis. They also corrupted many of the prophecies of the Messiah.¹⁵⁵

Since Tim's chronology potentially falls on this point, both theories must be investigated thoroughly.¹⁵⁶ We must examine the external and internal evidence for both theories and we must listen to the ancient eyewitnesses.

¹⁵⁵ They obviously could not erase all of them; but they did change many of them. This has been well documented.

¹⁵⁶ Refer to the Bibliography for a list of sources I have used in constructing my arguments in favor of the LXX. My arguments are not original, but I have independently verified the references and citations.

§E3. Tim dismisses the theory that the LXX might be correct with little discussion. The external evidence he presents in favor of the Masoretic Text actually weakens his position.

Tim argues cursorily that the external evidence contained in the Samaritan Pentateuch, the *Peshitta*, the *Latin Vulgate*, and the *Book of Jubilees* favors the primacy of the MT against the LXX. This is all of the external evidence he presents. He writes,

Of course, one might legitimately ask whether the LXX genealogical data might actually be correct, and the Hebrew text we now have might have been shortened. This question is quickly resolved by the fact that other ancient pre-Christian evidence supports the readings in the Hebrew text against the LXX. (186)

Samaritan Pentateuch

The first piece of external evidence Tim offers in support of his assertion is the SP. He begins,

This includes many of the genealogies in the Samaritan Pentateuch, which follow the Hebrew dates in Genesis 5, but agree with the Septuagint in some of the dates in chapter 11.

This statement is misleading. A comparison (Table 1) of the begetting ages between the MT and the SP in Genesis 5 shows that they differ in three out of the ten generations resulting in a total difference of 349 years, with the SP having the shorter chronology. That does not reflect good agreement between the SP and the MT. Tim then says that the SP agrees with the LXX “*in some of the dates in Chapter 11.*” But a comparison in Genesis 11 of the begetting ages reveals that the SP agrees with the LXX in **ALL** of the begetting ages.¹⁵⁷ Overall, in the 20 generations from Adam to Abraham, the SP agrees with the MT in eight; the SP agrees with the LXX in ten. Consequently, the SP cannot be listed as an “*ancient pre-Christian evidence*” to “*support the readings in the Hebrew against the LXX.*” But it does provide an important clue regarding the history of the text.

Peshitta

Continuing with his presentation of the external evidence, Tim writes,

Greek was not the only language into which the Old Testament Scriptures were translated in ancient times. It was also translated into Aramaic directly from the Hebrew, most likely by Jews not long after the time of Christ. The early Aramaic translation became the Old Testament of the Aramaic-speaking churches of the

¹⁵⁷ The only exception is the omission of a patriarch named “Cainan” between Arphaxad and Salah in the LXX. This patriarch is not mentioned in either the MT or the SP. See §E9.

east and is called the “Peshitta,” meaning common or straight. The Peshitta agrees completely with the Hebrew dates in Genesis. (186-187)

It is true that the Peshitta agrees with the MT but this does not support Tim’s argument that “*other ancient pre-Christian evidence supports the readings in the Hebrew text against the LXX*” because the Peshitta was translated well into the Second Century AD after the rabbis had produced their edited text which became the MT. It is not an “*ancient, pre-Christian*” text.

Latin Vulgate

Tim also includes Jerome’s Latin Vulgate in this list. He writes,

Likewise, the Old Testament of the Latin Vulgate, translated by Jerome in the fourth century, follows a very old Hebrew text. The dates in the Vulgate also agree with the modern Hebrew text. (187)

Yes, the Vulgate does agree with the MT, but of course the Vulgate is much too late (by at least four centuries!) to be considered as “*ancient pre-Christian evidence*” per Tim’s argument. It was translated from the edited text of the rabbis after the destruction of Jerusalem.

The Book of Jubilees

Finally, Tim includes the *Book of Jubilees* in his list of “*ancient pre-Christian evidence that supports the readings in the Hebrew text against the LXX.*” He writes,

Some pre-Christian Jewish non-canonical books show dependence on the shorter dates of the Hebrew text as well. The book of Jubilees gives the birth of Abraham around 1860 years after creation, very close to the total derived from the Hebrew text, and far shorter than the LXX. (187)

It is true that the *Book of Jubilees* is a pre-Christian, Jewish, non-canonical book. But the statement that it shows “*dependence on the shorter dates of the Hebrew text*” is misleading. Table 2 is a repetition of Table 1 with a column added for the begetting ages according to the *Book of Jubilees*. Chronologically, Jubilees falls between the LXX and the SP,¹⁵⁸ so I have placed it in the second column to reflect the relative ages and the chronological sequence of these four witnesses.

¹⁵⁸ This is not to suggest that the SP did not exist prior to Jubilees; however, the SP underwent major editing in the late second century B.C. which included updating the script and spelling, harmonizing parallel accounts, “resolving” exegetical difficulties, changes to grammar and syntax, and many sectarian changes. These revisions also include changes to the ages in Genesis 5 and 11.

Table 2. The Begetting Ages of Genesis 5 and 11 Including Jubilees

	LXX	Jubilees	SP	MT
Adam	230	130	130	130
Seth	205	105	105	105
Enosh	190	90	90	90
Kenan	170	70	70	70
Mahalalel	165	66	65	65
Jared	162	61	62	162
Enoch	165	65	65	65
Methuselah	187	67	67	187
Lamech	188	53	53	182
Noah	500	500	500	500
Shem	100	104	100	100
Arpachshad	135	64	135	35
Cainan	130	57	-	-
Shelah	130	71	130	30
Eber	134	64	134	34
Peleg	130	12	130	30
Reu	132	108	132	32
Serug	130	57	130	30
Nahor	79	62	79	29
Terah	70 (130)	70	70	70 (130)
Total	3392	1876	2247	2006

Note the following highlights from this table.

- The table moves chronologically from left to right.
- In going from the LXX to the *Book of Jubilees*, there is a systematic altering of the begetting ages by 100 years in seven out of the ten generations before the flood (Genesis 5). ***This is historically the earliest occurrence of this pattern.*** After the flood, all of the ages have been altered, but there is no obvious pattern to the changes. Both the LXX and Jubilees contain Cainan between Arpachshad and Shelah.
- In going from *Jubilees* to the SP, the ages before the flood are virtually identical and the total length is the same, but the SP returns to the ages found in the LXX for the generations after the flood. There are many such sectarian affinities between the SP and *Jubilees*. The SP does not have Cainan.
- In going from the SP to the MT, *before the flood* the MT keeps seven of the ten ages found in Jubilees and the SP but has the same ages as the LXX in two of the generations and is closer to the LXX for Lamech. *After the flood*, the ages in the MT display the same systematic pattern between the MT and the LXX that

was found earlier between the LXX and the other two witness. The MT does not include Cainan.

- Comparing only the MT and *Jubilees*, we find that they differ from each other significantly in 10 out of the 20 generations by anywhere from 30 to 120 years. Some of the differences result in shortening the timeline and some in lengthening it. The net difference at the end is that *Jubilees* is shorter than the MT by about 130 years. This does not support Tim's argument that *Jubilees* shows "dependence on the shorter dates of the Hebrew text."

Although Tim cites *Jubilees* in support of the MT, Table 2 shows that *Jubilees* has more in common with the SP than with the MT. So why not argue in favor of the SP, and for that matter, why not use the SP in his chronology?

In summary, Tim stated that the question concerning which text (the MT versus the LXX) is correct "*is quickly resolved by the fact that other ancient pre-Christian evidence supports the readings in the Hebrew text against the LXX.*" In support of this statement, he listed the SP, the *Peshitta*, the *Latin Vulgate*, and the *Book of Jubilees*. Of these, the *Peshitta* and the *Vulgate* are not pre-Christian works, both having been translated from the proto-Masoretic Text after the recension by Akiva. The SP agrees with the MT in seven out of the ten generations from Adam to Noah, but in the generations from Noah to Abraham, the SP is identical to the LXX with the exception of Cainan. The *Book of Jubilees* is a pre-Christian work but it has more affinity with the SP than with the MT. in the end, **none of the external evidence that Tim cited supports his point.**

Although *Jubilees* does not lend support to the MT, it may in fact be the key to unraveling the mystery of what happened. Before explaining that, let us first review more of the external evidence.

§E4. There is substantial external evidence not cited in TOTE that favors the LXX over the MT.

If none of the external evidence that Tim cited actually favors the MT, then is there any other external evidence that the longer readings of the LXX existed in the Hebrew text prior to the Second Century AD? Yes, there is. I list the following:

- (1) Demetrius the Chronographer¹⁵⁹ (3rd Century BC Jewish Historian)
- (2) Eupolemus,¹⁶⁰ son of John, son of Hakkoz (Second Century BC Jewish Historian)

¹⁵⁹ Smith, Henry B. *Methuselah's Begetting Age in Genesis 5:25 and the Primeval Chronology of the Septuagint: A Closer Look at the Textual and Historical Evidence*, *Answers Research Journal* 10 (2017): 169-179 Published by Answers in Genesis

(3) Josephus (Antiquities of the Jews)

Demetrius the Chronographer

Demetrius the Chronographer was a Jewish historian who lived in Alexandria around 225 BC during the reign of Ptolemy IV. His works are preserved in Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica* and Clement of Alexandria's *Stromata*. His chronology agrees with the ages in the LXX. It is possible that his chronology was finished before the LXX (also in Alexandria), which would prove that the ages were in the *Vorlage*, but this is not certain. At the very least, his work proves that the longer ages in the LXX were part of the LXX as it was originally translated, and not later alterations.¹⁶¹

Eupolemus

Eupolemus was a Palestinian Jew who also compiled a history of the Jews and completed a chronology in ca. 161 BC. Only six fragments of his work have survived, but he is quoted by Eusebius, Clement of Alexandria, and Alexander Polyhistor. His chronology agrees with the LXX. He calculated 5,149 years from Adam to the fifth year of Demetrius Soter (158-157 BC). As a Palestinian Jew, he would have had access to both the LXX and the Hebrew text and it seems unlikely that he would have used the data in the LXX if they did not agree with the Hebrew.

Josephus

Josephus was a First Century Jewish historian born in 37 AD in Jerusalem. His father was a priest and his mother was a descendent of the Hasmonean dynasty. His historical work has survived mostly intact. The ages he gives in his *Antiquities of the Jews* are identical to the LXX. The observation regarding Eupolemus, that as a Palestinian Jew he would not have used the data in the LXX if he knew it contradicted the Hebrew text, applies also to Josephus. However, in addition to that supposition, we also have Josephus' explicit statement that he was using the Hebrew text exclusively and that he did not alter it. He wrote,

“But let no one blame me for writing down everything of this nature, as I find it in our ancient books; for as to that matter, I have plainly assured those that think me defective in any such point, or complain of my management, and have told them in the beginning of this history, that I intended to do no more than translate the Hebrew books into the Greek language, and promised them to explain those

¹⁶⁰ Jeremy Sexton and Henry B. Smith Jr., *Primeval Chronology Restored: Revisiting the Genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11. Bible and Spade 29.2, (2016)*

¹⁶¹ The Jewish Encyclopedia says that Demetrius based his chronology on the LXX simply because his data agree with the LXX rather than the MT.

facts, without adding anything to them of my own, or taking anything away from there.” (Antiquities Book 10, Chapter 10)

Chronologically, Josephus falls between the SP and the MT. Table 3 is a repetition of Table 2, with the evidence of Josephus included. This table does not contain a total for the dates in Josephus because Josephus does not record the begetting ages for Noah and Shem.

Table 3. The Begetting Ages of Genesis 5 and 11 Including Josephus

	LXX	Jubilees	SP	Josephus	MT
Adam	230	130	130	230	130
Seth	205	105	105	205	105
Enosh	190	90	90	190	90
Kenan	170	70	70	170	70
Mahalalel	165	66	65	165	65
Jared	162	61	62	162	162
Enoch	165	65	65	165	65
Methuselah	187	67	67	187	187
Lamech	188	53	53	182	182
Noah	500	500	500		500
Shem	100	104	100		100
Arpachshad	135	64	135	135	35
Cainan	130	57	-		-
Shelah	130	71	130	130	30
Eber	134	64	134	134	34
Peleg	130	12	130	130	30
Reu	132	108	132	132	32
Serug	130	57	130	132	30
Nahor	79	62	79	120	29
Terah	70 (130)	70	70	70 (130)	70 (130)
Total	3392	1876	2247		2006

These independent external witnesses provide compelling evidence (explicitly in Josephus) that only the longer ages existed in the Hebrew text (*Vorlage*) during the last three centuries before Christ and during the first century after Christ. They also suggest that **the shorter ages originated with Jubilees**. Sexton and Smith put it like this,

“...the earliest witness to the longer chronology (LXX) predates the earliest witness to the MT’s shorter chronology by about 400 years. If the MT’s chronology is original, why did it disappear until the second century AD, and why did the longer chronology prevail in both Hebrew and Greek sources until then?”

Thus far, the weight of the external evidence overwhelmingly suggests that the chronology in the MT is corrupt and that of the LXX is correct.

§E5. The *Book of Jubilees* is demonstrably unreliable, theologically biased, and evidently the source of the shorter chronologies.

If we consider the hypothesis that the LXX is an accurate and faithful witness to the original dates contained in the *Vorlage*, then a coherent story emerges that explains how and why the shorter chronologies subsequently developed beginning with the *Book of Jubilees*.

The image of *Jubilees* painted in TOTE is perfunctory. Tim writes,

The idea that the Jubilee calendar may be more than just something that the Jews began to use under Joshua is evident from an ancient Jewish book written shortly after the Babylonian captivity, called “The Book of Jubilees.” This book purports to be a record of oral tradition from Moses. It claims that the Jubilee cycle was revealed to Moses as a continuous calendar counting down from Creation to the coming of Messiah to reign, using Sabbatical and Jubilee years... Thus, the concept that the Sabbatical and Jubilee calendar is God’s calendar, beginning at creation, was a well-established concept in Judaism long before Christ. And since some of the early Christians referenced this book and sometimes quoted from it, it is apparent that they were also familiar with this concept. (230-231)

Jubilees purports to be far more than “a record of oral tradition from Moses.” Consider the following facts.

(i) *Jubilees* claims to be direct, written revelation from the “angel of the presence” to Moses. In fact, *Jubilees* claims that ultimately Moses was not entrusted to write the words of the revelation himself, and they were literally written down by the angel of the presence at God’s command. Moreover, *Jubilees* purports to have been written before creation on “heavenly tablets.” In this way, *Jubilees* claims authority surpassing Moses and the Torah.

(ii) *Jubilees* was written with a sectarian theological agenda. The agenda was to overthrow the luni-solar calendar used in mainstream Judaism, to impose a true 364 day calendar, and to forbid adjusting or correcting the calendar with leap years or intercalary months. Why 364 days? The number 364 makes the year divisible by 13 months with exactly 28 days or four weeks each. Thus, everything is divisible by seven and every month and every year would begin on the same day of the week (Sunday). Every festival and holy day would fall on the same day every year. This calendar served the grander theological agenda, which was the idea that God was guiding all of human history by means of the 49 year Jubilee cycle beginning at creation and culminating in

the New Heavens and New Earth. According to *Jubilees*, Israel entered the Land of Canaan exactly 2,450 years *to the day* from creation. This would be the 50th Jubilee, a Jubilee of Jubilees ($49 \times 50 = 2450$).¹⁶²

Because the solar year is 365.25 days long, a 364 day year will very quickly result in the seasons (and therefore the seasonal feasts) no longer occurring in their proper place. Such a calendar will be out of sync with the solar calendar by 1.25 days per year. That is 1,250 days (3.42 years) every 1,000 years. It is 20.5 years in 6,000 years. It would seem that this fact would implicitly prove that the 364 day calendar is untenable, but the author of *Jubilees* declares that just the opposite is true. If only Israel had kept the 364 day calendar faithfully, then perfect order would have been the result. Thus, the calendar is not the problem; Israel's disobedience to the true calendar is the problem. And this unfaithfulness to the true calendar brings about all other forms of unfaithfulness.

And on this account he ordained them [the seasonal feasts] for himself as feasts for a memorial forever, and thus are they ordained. And they placed them on the heavenly tablets, each had thirteen weeks; from one to another (passed) their memorial, from the first to the second, and from the second to the third, and from the third to the fourth. And all the days of the commandment will be two and fifty weeks of days, and (these will make) the entire year complete. Thus it is engraven and ordained on the heavenly tablets. And there is no neglecting (this commandment) for a single year or from year to year. And command thou the children of Israel that they observe the years according to this reckoning- three hundred and sixty-four days, and (these) will constitute a complete year, and they will not disturb its time from its days and from its feasts; for everything will fall out in them according to their testimony, and they will not leave out any day nor disturb any feasts. But if they do neglect and do not observe them according to His commandment, then they will disturb all their seasons and the years will be dislodged from this (order), [and they will disturb the seasons and the years will be dislodged] and they will neglect their ordinances. And all the children of Israel will forget and will not find the path of the years, and will forget the new moons, and seasons, and sabbaths and they will go wrong as to all the order of the years. For I know and from henceforth will I declare it unto thee, and it is not of my own devising; for the book (lies) written before me, and on the heavenly tablets the division of days is ordained, lest they forget the feasts of the covenant and walk according to the feasts of the Gentiles after their error and after their ignorance. For there will be those who will assuredly make observations of the moon -how (it) disturbs the seasons and comes in from year to year ten days too soon. For this reason the years will come upon them when they will disturb (the order), and make an abominable (day) the day of testimony, and an unclean day a feast day, and they will confound all the days, the holy with the unclean, and

¹⁶² TOTE obviously has a similar agenda, but Tim regards the Jubilee cycle as consisting of 50 years rather than 49.

the unclean day with the holy; for they will go wrong as to the months and sabbaths and feasts and jubilees. For this reason I command and testify to thee that thou mayst testify to them; for after thy death thy children will disturb (them), so that they will not make the year three hundred and sixty-four days only, and for this reason they will go wrong as to the new moons and seasons and sabbaths and festivals, and they will eat all kinds of blood with all kinds of flesh.
Book of Jubilees, 6:28-38

Having two contradictory calendars would mean the festivals would fall on different days for each group. Therefore, holding to a 364 day calendar would make worship with mainstream Judaism impossible. Consequently, it was necessary to separate from the mainstream. It is significant that in 2017, one of the last of the Dead Sea Scrolls¹⁶³ was published by the University of Haifa.¹⁶⁴ In this article the authors observe,

The final result, as presented here, is a calendar text covering a 364-day year, with pronounced concluding formulas at the conclusion of each of the seasons... The calendar constituted a central part of the sectarian identity. Members of the Yaḥad adhered to a year of 364 days, which was different from the luni-solar year of the Jerusalem temple and the Hasmonean state. The sectarian calendrical tradition is well represented in a variety of documents from Qumran and outside it.

It is into this sectarian milieu that the *Book of Jubilees* fits.

(iii) In order to force the data to fit this agenda, *Jubilees* contains numerous alterations to the chronology. The manipulation of the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 is obvious from the unblushing assigning of 12 years for the begetting age of Peleg. Furthermore, the total length of the genealogies (1,876 years) is exactly divisible by 7. Such machinations are not confined to the genealogies. According to *Jubilees*, Abraham was 111 when Isaac was born (versus 100 years according to Scripture) and Abraham was 227 when he died (versus 175 years according to Scripture). There is also a great deal of mythology in *Jubilees*, much of it built around the number seven and the 49-year Jubilee cycle.¹⁶⁵

Because *Jubilees* makes erroneous claims to divine authority, and because its chronology is palpably contrived to fit a sectarian agenda, any agreement between the

¹⁶³ 4Q324d

¹⁶⁴ Ratzon, Eshbal, and Jonathan Ben-Dov, *A Newly Reconstructed Calendrical Scroll from Qumran in Cryptic Script*, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 136, no. 4 (2017): 905–936

¹⁶⁵ For example, Abraham was born in a seventh year. In his 14th year, Abraham questions Terah about his idol worship. At 60, Abraham set fire to Terah's house of idols simultaneously destroying the idols and killing his brother Haran. Also, the righteous patriarchs were all born on the Feast of Pentecost while the unrighteous were born at other times of the year.

begetting ages in *Jubilees* and those of the MT does NOT add credibility to the MT. On the contrary, it casts doubt on the MT.

Even a casual reading of the Gospels reveals the deep animosity that existed between mainstream Judaism and the Samaritan sect. For the most part, the SP and the MT are in alignment, but the SP does display some sectarian characteristics. For example, Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac occurs on Mount Moreh in Samaria instead of Mount Moriah, and the Temple stands on Mount Gerizim in Samaria, not in Jerusalem.¹⁶⁶

Major revisions were made to the SP in the second century BC. That is also when the *Book of Jubilees* was written. The revisions mostly involved modernizing the grammar and spelling. They also removed historical and exegetical difficulties and harmonized parallel passages.¹⁶⁷ Both writings are sectarian and the SP displays evidence of having borrowed from *Jubilees*, particularly with respect to the chronology.

§E6: The internal evidence does not favor the Masoretic Text.

The next several paragraphs in Chapter 7 of TOTE can be characterized as Tim's internal evidence for the primacy of the MT. He examines the differences between the MT and the LXX chronologies and advances his theory of the *method* and the *motive* for the change. Tim writes,

The variant readings in the Septuagint are almost certainly the result of an intentional manipulation of the text. There is a distinct pattern to these changes proving that they are not the result of accidental scribal error, but intentional manipulation to fulfill some particular agenda. In most of the twenty generations, in Genesis 5 and 11, the age of the father when his son was born is exactly 100 years longer in the LXX. Yet, the time that he lived after his son was born is shortened by the same 100 years, so that the total life-spans still agree with the Hebrew text. For example, the Hebrew Bible states that Seth was born in Adam's 130th year. Then the text says Adam lived 800 years more, making a total of 930 years, within the Millennial Day in which God said Adam would die. The Septuagint adds exactly 100 years, claiming that Seth was born in Adam's 230th year. If this had been the only alteration to Adam's lifespan, then Adam would have lived 1030 years, beyond the Millennial Day in which God said he would die. So, the LXX translators also subtracted exactly 100 years from Adam's remaining years after Seth was born, making it 700 instead of 800 as in the Hebrew text.

The systematic pattern of adding 100 years to each lifespan before a the (sic) son was born, followed by subtracting 100 years from the remaining years,

¹⁶⁶ John 4:20

¹⁶⁷ Smith, Henry B., *MT, SP, or LXX?* Bible and Spade 31.1 (2018)

continues for most of the generations listed in the Genesis genealogies in the Septuagint.

The net effect of these intentional alterations was to keep the total lifespans undisturbed, yet throw off any attempt at a continuous chronology. Chronologies follow the genealogical tree using only the portion of an individual's lifetime until the next son in the genealogy was born, adding up the ages of each father when his son was born. (187-188)

None of this is providing any evidence for his case. Everyone on both sides of the issue agrees that the differences between the MT and the LXX follow a systematic pattern and thus reflect an intentional manipulation. That is not the question. The question is *which text was manipulated?* In his discussion of this topic, Tim continually assumes what he has not proven – that the LXX is the one that was manipulated. But everything he writes in which he claims that the LXX was *lengthened* could be reversed to say just as easily that the MT was *shortened*.

Since we are examining the internal evidence and looking for clues as to whether the manipulation was lengthening (inflation) or shortening (deflation), we should be precise about which generations were altered and by how much.

Referring again to Table 3, there is a 100-year alteration for the begetting ages of Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Enoch, Arpachshad, Shelah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, and Serug, and a single 50 year alteration for Nahor. This adds up to $(12 \times 100) + 50 = 1,250$ years. There is also a six year difference in the generation of Lamech which brings the total to 1,256 years. Finally, there is the missing Cainan which adds another 130 years bringing the final total to 1,386 years. There is no alteration for the remaining generations. Let us now examine these numbers looking for internal clues that might suggest in which direction (inflation or deflation) the manipulation took place.

Tables 4 and 5 present the ages of the Patriarchs at the birth of each new generation up to the Great Flood. Table 4 depicts the data in the MT and Table 5 depicts the data in the LXX. Unlike the previous tables, these are cumulative showing the ages of the Patriarchs at the birth of their first son, grandson, great-grandson, etc. For example, the first column of Table 4 shows Adam to be in his 130th year when Seth was born and his 235th year when Enosh was born and his 325th year when Kenan was born etc., according to the MT. Since Adam died in his 930th year, he disappears from the Table after the birth of Lamech.

Table 4 Ages at the Birth of Each Generation and at the Flood According to MT

Adam	Seth	Enosh	Kenan	Mahalalel	Jared	Enoch	Methuselah	Lamech	Noah
130									
235	105								
325	195	90							
395	265	160	70						
460	330	225	135	65					
622	492	387	297	227	162				
687	557	452	362	292	227	65			
874	744	639	549	479	414	252	187		
		821	731	661	596	434	369	182	
F		L	O	O	D	969		600	

Table 5 Ages at the Birth of Each Generation and at the Flood According to LXX

Adam	Seth	Enosh	Kenan	Mahalalel	Jared	Enoch	Methuselah	Lamech	Noah
230									
435	205								
625	395	190							
795	565	360	170						
960	730	525	335	165					
	892	687	497	327	162				
		852	662	492	327	165			
			849	679	514	352	187		
				867	702	540	375	188	
F		L	O	O	D			600	

Let us assume first that the LXX data is original and that the MT *shortened* the generations as shown in Table 4. What Table 4 reveals is that according to the MT, the last seven generations before Noah were still living and still had many decades to go when Noah was born. Table 4 is striking inasmuch as it shows a “compression” or “flattening” of the generations. Table 4 shows that according to this scenario, Methuselah died the same year as the Flood, or perhaps he died in the Flood.

Table 4 also shows that under this scenario, the generations have been shortened almost to the extreme limit of what is possible. Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, and Enoch cannot be shortened another 100 years because to do so would make them too young to beget children. Methuselah and Lamech cannot be shortened because to do so would result in their surviving the Flood. The only one that could possibly be shortened is Jared, but to do so would result in all ten generations (including Adam) still being alive along with Noah. Interestingly, that is actually what the SP does. So the SP has actually been shortened to the extreme limit of what is possible!

Now let us assume that the MT data is original and that the LXX *lengthened* the generations as shown in Table 5. Unlike the previous (shortening) scenario, this one does not face the same constraint. The generations could have been lengthened far more than they have been without causing any issues with internal consistency. The only practical limitation is in having men beget children near the end of their lives.

Now consider the generations after the flood in Genesis 11 (back to Table 3). There are exactly 100 year adjustments in each of the first six generations from Shem: Arpachshad, Shelah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, and Serug. This could reflect either lengthening or shortening. However, look at the next generation – Nahor. This is the only generation that is altered by 50 rather than 100 years. Why is the pattern broken in this one generation? The MT has Nahor giving birth in his 29th year and the LXX has 79. If MT is original, then there is no reason for the LXX to break the pattern of adding 100 years, and so it would be expected that the LXX would have 129 rather than 79. There is no logical reason for the pattern to be changed. But if the LXX is original and the MT is attempting to shorten the chronology, then it would be impossible for the MT to subtract 100 years. That explains why only 50 years were subtracted in this one generation.

Sexton and Smith identify additional items of internal evidence, one of which is especially compelling. In Genesis 25 we read the following regarding the death of Abraham.

⁷ This is the sum of the years of Abraham's life which he lived: one hundred and seventy-five years. ⁸ Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people.

According to the MT chronology, Shem had died only 25 years before Abraham's death at **600 years** of age. Arpachshad had died 87 years earlier at **438**; Shelah had died 57 years earlier at **433**; and **Eber was still alive at 460!** Moreover, except for his grandfather Nahor, all nine of his ancestors going back to Shem were still living during Abraham's lifetime. Abraham would have known Shem for 150 years before the old patriarch passed away. Only Noah had died too soon to meet Abraham. In such a context, it is incongruent to say of Abraham, that he had died at age 175 "*in a good old age, an old man and full of years.*"

The LXX chronology is in sharp contrast. When Abraham died, Shem had been dead 905 years, Arpachshad 870, Shelah 680, and Eber 605. In fact, none of Abraham's progenitors (before Terah) had lived to see Abraham and human lifespans had dropped drastically. In this context, the statement of Genesis 25:8 is much more congruent with the time.

All of these lines of internal evidence comprise significant internal evidence that the LXX chronology is original and the MT *shortened* the generations.

§E7: The alleged motive presented in TOTE is not plausible.

Altering the chronological information was an egregious crime. What could have motivated it? Any theory regarding why someone altered the text must address not only their alleged purpose, but should also address whether the perpetrators could have had a reasonable expectation of success and of evading detection. Tim's theory has already been alluded to, but it needs to be revisited because it leaves numerous questions unanswered. He writes,

It seems the Septuagint translators did not want to disturb the total life-spans of the patriarchs, having them live longer than one millennium. Yet, they clearly wanted to throw off anyone wishing to construct a chronology of the period. The Hebrew text gives a total for the period from Adam to Abraham as about 2000 years. Yet, the Septuagint gives a total of about 3400 years. Since this is the only real effect from this systematic alteration, it is logical to infer that the motive was to deny the reader a true chronology.

Why would the Jewish scribes who translated the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek intentionally alter the text? We should keep in mind that they were employed by Ptolemy, king of Egypt, to make this translation for his library in Alexandria. Perhaps they wanted to throw off any attempt at a chronology by a non-Jew, or even by the common Jewish people. The Hebrew language was fast becoming a dead language, used only by the elite scribes and priests by the time of Christ. The common people spoke Greek. Obscuring the chronological data could have been their way of keeping the prophecies of the time when the Kingdom would arrive out of reach of the secular authorities. While the Jews apparently did not know of the Millennial Week concept until after it was introduced by Christians, they developed other sophisticated chronological schemes which attempted to predict the exact year of the coming of Messiah and His Kingdom.

So Tim's theory regarding the motive is that the Jewish translators wanted to keep the true chronology out of reach of the secular authorities and of the common people so that they would not have been able to calculate the time when the Kingdom would arrive. For the success of this crime, they relied on the fact that Hebrew was a dead language understood only by elite scribes and priests. This is not a plausible theory for at least the following four reasons.

- (1) The number of persons who would have to have known about the conspiracy is enormous. Multiple Jewish scholars compiled histories and chronologies during this time. Demetrius the Chronographer, Eupolemus, Philo, and Josephus are among these and all used chronological data that matched the LXX even when they explicitly claimed to be following the Hebrew. Furthermore, the entire body of priests and scribes whose career was the study and teaching of the Scriptures would have to have known about the conspiracy and were complicit in keeping it secret.

- (2) Tim seems to think that Hebrew was a completely foreign tongue to all but the clergy, much like Latin was in Medieval Europe. But that is not accurate. According to Edersheim,¹⁶⁸ Aramaic was the vernacular and meturgamim (interpreters) were commonly used. Nevertheless, Hebrew was a subject of study for every Jew living in Palestine, not for the purpose of conversational fluency, but for the express purpose of acquiring functional literacy in reading the Torah. Consequently, the conspiracy could not have been confined to an elite class but every Jew in Palestine must have been aware of it and would have had to be part of the conspiracy for it to be kept from the secular authorities.
- (3) The Jews had extreme reverence for their sacred writings. It is unthinkable that a fraudulent alteration of their treasured Scriptures would have been overlooked, tolerated, or forgiven. To imagine that this fraud could have been perpetrated without a single word of protest for over 400 years and without ever coming to the attention of the secular authorities is impossible. On the contrary, every indication we have is that the Jews universally held the LXX in extremely high regard, almost equal to the Hebrew.
- (4) While Tim's theory deals with the discrepancies between the LXX and the MT, it does not even attempt to account for the data in the SP or *Jubilees*. An adequate theory must be able to explain all of the available data.

For these reasons, Tim's theory is implausible.

§E8: A theory assigning primacy to the LXX is more plausible and accounts for all of the data.

If it didn't happen as Tim theorizes, what is a reasonable alternative? The following theory and sequence of events begins with the assumption that the data in the LXX are correct and are a faithful representation of the *Vorlage*. Table 3 will be the point of reference for the discussion.

From LXX to the Book of Jubilees

The first intentional alteration of the chronology occurred in the *Book of Jubilees*. The nature of the changes in going from the LXX to *Jubilees* was described in §E3. It was observed that in going from the LXX to the *Book of Jubilees*, there is a systematic altering of the begetting ages by 100 years in seven out of the ten generations before the flood (Genesis 5). After the flood, all of the ages have been altered. I previously remarked that there is no "obvious" pattern to the post-flood changes, but when the motive for the changes is known, a pattern emerges.

¹⁶⁸ Edersheim, Alfred, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*, Chapters 7, 8, 17

Jubilees presents itself as inspired Scripture. It contradicts the Torah in many places; therefore, we must either reject *Jubilees* or Moses. Besides being false scripture, it is also false prophecy. Specifically, *Jubilees* pretends to have been written while Moses was on Mount Sinai, 40 years before the Israelites entered the Land. *Jubilees* advances a historic and prophetic construct in which most of the events of the book take place in sabbath (7th) years and the major events happen in Jubilee (49th) years. The Jubilee cycle followed in the *Book of Jubilees* is 49 years rather than 50 years as in TOTE. This agenda is spelled out beginning in the first chapter.

And do thou write down for thyself all these words which I declare unto thee on this mountain, the first and the last, which shall come to pass in all the divisions of the days in the law and in the testimony and in the weeks and the jubilees unto eternity, until I descend and dwell with them throughout eternity.' And He said to the angel of the presence: Write for Moses from the beginning of creation till My sanctuary has been built among them for all eternity.

And the angel of the presence who went before the camp of Israel took the tables of the divisions of the years -from the time of the creation- of the law and of the testimony of the weeks of the jubilees, according to the individual years, according to all the number of the jubilees [according, to the individual years], from the day of the [new] creation when the heavens and the earth shall be renewed and all their creation according to the powers of the heaven, and according to all the creation of the earth, until the sanctuary of the Lord shall be made in Jerusalem on Mount Zion, and all the luminaries be renewed for healing and for peace and for blessing for all the elect of Israel, and that thus it may be from that day and unto all the days of the earth. Book of Jubilees 1

And God appointed the sun to be a great sign on the earth for days and for sabbaths and for months and for feasts and for years and for sabbaths of years and for jubilees and for all seasons of the years. Book of Jubilees 2

Referring again to Table 3, it will be noted that the total number of years from Creation until the birth of Abraham 1,876 years. This is the shortest of the five columns in Table 3. This number is divisible by 7 ($1876 \div 7 = 268$). Thus, Abraham was born in a sabbath year. As it turns out according to *Jubilees*, the Israelites entered the Land of Canaan in the 50th Jubilee in A.M. 2450 (because $49 \times 50 = 2450$).

And after this law I made known to thee the days of the Sabbaths in the desert of Sin[ai], which is between Elim and Sinai. And I told thee of the Sabbaths of the land on Mount Sinai, and I told thee of the jubilee years in the sabbaths of years: but the year thereof have I not told thee till ye enter the land which ye are to possess. And the land also shall keep its sabbaths while they dwell upon it, and they shall know the jubilee year. Wherefore I have ordained for thee the year-weeks and the years and the jubilees: there are forty-nine jubilees from the days of Adam until this day, [2410 A.M.] and one week and two years: and there are

yet forty years to come (lit. 'distant') for learning the [2450 A.M.] commandments of the Lord, until they pass over into the land of Canaan, crossing the Jordan to the west. And the jubilees shall pass by, until Israel is cleansed from all guilt of fornication, and uncleanness, and pollution, and sin, and error, and dwells with confidence in all the land, and there shall be no more a Satan or any evil one, and the land shall be clean from that time for evermore. Book of Jubilees 50

In order to achieve these apparently miraculous results, the *Book of Jubilees* simply changed the chronology to fit the agenda. This observation is true regardless of whether one takes the MT to be the original or the LXX. Consequently, we have the motive and the method for the first alteration of the text.

From the Book of Jubilees to the SP

The post-flood chronology of the SP is essentially the same as the LXX. But the pre-flood chronology of the SP is essentially the same as the Book of Jubilees. Since we know that the chronology of *Jubilees* was contrived with an agenda, it logically follows that the SP's pre-flood chronology must have been revised to agree with *Jubilees* in the second century BC when other revisions to the SP took place. What motive would the Samaritans have had for doing this?

First, both the Samaritan texts and *Jubilees* place great emphasis on jubilee cycles and chronology. This points to a theological affinity. Secondly, *Jubilees* was considered authoritative at Qumran. This authoritative status may have provided additional motivation (or justification) for the Samaritans to incorporate these changes. Thirdly, the SP chronology makes the building of the Samaritan Temple on Mount Gerizim to occur in the 80th jubilee from Adam. This not only points to manipulation of the chronology, but it also explains why the SP does not change the data in Genesis 11.

The Masoretic Text

I have suggested that the fraud perpetrated in the MT occurred in the second century AD when the historical context would have been radically different from the third century BC. Rabbinic Judaism was facing an existential crisis. Jerusalem and the Temple had been destroyed and the nation scattered. Most of the Hebrew manuscripts kept at the temple had been destroyed, and the few that remained were in the possession of the rabbis. The gospel was spreading throughout the Roman world and beyond and multitudes of Gentiles and Jews, even from among the priesthood, had turned to Christ. The Bar Kochba revolt (in which Rabbi Akiva had participated) had failed. Rabbinic Judaism was in a fight for its survival. In the context of this crisis of survival, an opportunity was recognized and seized that would have been utterly unthinkable four centuries earlier.

The rabbis were well aware of the teaching that existed among multiple Jewish sects during this time regarding the coming of the Messiah in the last two thousand years (AM 4000 - 6000) from Creation. There are many statements regarding this teaching in the Babylonian Talmud and other sources. I hypothesize that they made use of this teaching and altered (shortened) the chronology in order to disqualify Jesus from being the Messiah. The following passage in the Talmud elucidates.

*"Abayi, however, said two thousand will be destroyed, as it reads [Hosea, vi. 2]: 'He will revive us after two days. There is a Boraitha in accordance with R. Ktina: As in the Sabbath period, the seventh year is a release, so will it be with the whole world that one thousand years after six will be a release, as above cited verse [Isa. xii. i] and [Ps. xcii. 11]: 'A Psalm or song for the Sabbath day,' which means the day which will be all Sabbath. And as [ibid. xc. 4]: 'For a thousand years are in thy eyes but as the yesterday when it is passed.' The disciples of Elijah taught: **The world will continue for six thousand years, the first two thousand of which were a chaos (Tahu), the second two thousand were of wisdom, and the third two thousand are the days of the Messiah,** and because of our sins many, many years of these have elapsed, and still he has not come. Elijah said to R. Jehudah, the brother of R. Sala the Pious: **The world will continue for no less than eighty-five jubilaic periods, and in the last jubilaic period ben David will come.** And to the question: At its beginning or at its end? He answered: I don't know. Has this passed already, or will it come? He also answered, I don't know. R. Ashi, however, said: Elijah told him thus: **Until the above mentioned time will pass you shall not have any hope for him. But after that time, you may hope.**" Babylonian Talmud, Volume VIII (XVI)—Tract Sanhedrin. Pert II. (Haggada), Chapter XI.*

According to this reckoning, the world must continue for 4,250 years (85 Jubilaic cycles of 50 years) or 4,165 years (85 Jubilaic cycles of 49 years according to some sources) before Messiah can come. Before this period has elapsed, *"you shall have no hope for him. But after that time, you may hope."* According to the chronology of the Septuagint, Jesus of Nazareth would have qualified. But by shortening the chronology as it is in the MT, Jesus arrived 165 - 250 years too soon. By the second century, when these changes to the text were introduced, the rabbis situated themselves on the very eve of the coming of the Messiah!

That the rabbis altered the Hebrew text to omit or reinterpret Messianic passages is well attested in the Early Church Fathers. Tim is aware of this fact and has made use of it elsewhere. These are the rabbis who persecuted the apostles and murdered their Messiah. If they were capable of that, how difficult is it to believe that they intentionally corrupted their own Scriptures?

Consequently, we have motive, method, opportunity, and eyewitnesses. It seems to me that the reason the early chiliasts did not use the Hebrew text for their calculations was

not because they were ignorant of it or because they were helpless to make use of it. They were perfectly aware of it and yet considered it inferior. On this point, they were most certainly correct.

§E9: The evidence overwhelmingly supports the inclusion of two Cainan's in the original genealogy.

Besides the ages of the Patriarchs, one of the most conspicuous differences between the Masoretic Text and the LXX is the existence of a Patriarch named "Cainan." Compare this passage in Genesis 11 in the MT (NKJV translation) and the LXX.

Genesis 11 Masoretic Text

¹² Arphaxad lived thirty-five years, and begot Salah. ¹³ After he begot Salah, Arphaxad lived four hundred and three years, and begot sons and daughters.

Genesis 11 LXX

¹² And Arphaxad lived a hundred and thirty-five years, and begot Cainan. ¹³ And Arphaxad lived after he had begotten Cainan, four hundred years, and begot sons and daughters, and died. And Cainan lived a hundred and thirty years and begot Sala; and Canaan lived after he had begotten Sala, three hundred and thirty years, and begot sons and daughters, and died.

This is the second "Cainan" named in Genesis. There is another "Cainan," or "Kenan" the fourth generation from Adam. This discrepancy constitutes a difference of 230 years between the two genealogies. Which record is correct? Did the Masoretic Text erroneously *omit* this generation or did the LXX erroneously *add* this generation?

Tim's table on Page 249 does not include a Cainan between Arphaxad and Sela. This is no surprise since he has already stated that the correct data is in the Hebrew Masoretic Text. What makes this question worth raising at this point is that both Cainans are included Luke's Genealogy in Luke 3.

*³⁵ the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, ³⁶ **the son of Cainan**, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, ³⁷ the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel, **the son of Cainan**, ³⁸ the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.*

This means that Luke's Genealogy agrees with the LXX rather than the MT. Tim does not discuss this problem in his book. However, he did propose a theoretical solution¹⁶⁹ in response to a critique of his book by Leslie McFall. By "theoretical," I mean that the

¹⁶⁹ http://www.4windsfellowships.net/articles/Chronology/1_Moses.pdf

proposed solution is a hypothesis of what *could* have happened; no historical evidence that it actually *did* happen has been presented.

Tim's theoretical solution is that the second Cainan was invented by the author of the Book of Jubilees and eventually found its way into our copies of Luke's Gospel. Tim's theory follows the following steps.

- a. The author of the Book of Jubilees invented the second Cainan in order to fill in a gap of years that resulted from the Book of Jubilee's mistaken use of 49 year Jubilee cycles instead of 50 year Jubilee cycles.
- b. The second Cainan was added to some copies of the LXX translation of Genesis by scribes who wanted to make the LXX conform to the Book of Jubilees. Tim states that this constitutes a "corruption" of the LXX manuscripts.
- c. A scribe copying Luke's Gospel, who also had copies of the Book of Jubilees and the corrupted version of the LXX, erroneously added the second Cainan to Luke's genealogy.
- d. All of the correct manuscripts of Luke's Gospel were lost and our existing manuscripts of Luke's Gospel are all descended from this single corrupted copy.

In my opinion, the existence of a Cainan between Arphaxad and Sela in Luke 3 cannot be dismissed so easily. There is substantial evidence that he did exist, that he was originally included in Luke's genealogy, and that he was in the *Vorlage*.¹⁷⁰

There is no evidence that the author of Jubilees invented the second Cainan. While he records many details about the lives and family histories of the Patriarchs (such as the names of sisters and wives), there is no evidence that he invented a new generation.

Cainan's originality in the LXX translation is virtually indisputable. He is not missing from any existing manuscript of the LXX prior to the 12th century AD.

Cainan must have been found in Demetrius' chronology inasmuch as he calculates 1,360 years from the Flood to Jacob's entry into Egypt. This would be impossible without Cainan. Demetrius' chronology was compiled within 70 years of the translation of the LXX. This being the case, it is not possible to suppose that Cainan entered Luke's Gospel as a scribal error. He must have been there originally.

Tim has argued elsewhere that Paul deposited copies of his Epistles and copies of Luke's Gospel (to which he refers as "*my gospel*") in all of the churches that he founded.

¹⁷⁰ Refer to the bibliography for this evidence. Smith, Henry B. From Adam to Abraham: An Update on the Genesis 5 and 11 Research Project: December 16, 2017, <http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2017/04/26/From-Adam-to-Abraham-An-Update-on-the-Genesis-5-and-11-Research-Project.aspx#Article>

This by itself would have ensured a wide circulation of uncorrupted copies of Luke's Gospel and multiple, independent, uncorrupted source manuscripts for the next generations of copyists.

I have already mentioned the theory that the Sanhedrin manipulated the proto-Masoretic text in the early second century deflating the chronology for the purpose of disqualifying Jesus from being the Messiah. But with all of the systematic altering of the begetting ages, Jesus would still qualify. They still needed to eliminate at least another 165 years. This was easily accomplished by simply dropping the second Cainan from the text.

Section E Conclusion

The foregoing arguments have dealt exclusively with Tim's argument that the early chiliasts failed to accurately predict the correct date of Christ's return because they used the Septuagint rather than the Masoretic Text. Perhaps this is so. But I maintain that *IF* it is so, then Tim must present a more compelling case. The issues of textual transmission and textual criticism are complex and Tim has offered only the most superficial case for the primacy of the MT. In my opinion, the weight of the external and internal evidence overwhelmingly favors the LXX over the MT.

Perhaps the real reason some of the early chiliasts failed is not that their data was flawed, but because they were pursuing knowledge that we have not been granted. Irenaeus was the quintessential chiliast and faithful witness in my estimation. He certainly believed in watching for the signs of the end times. But he did NOT believe in calculating that day before the signs had appeared. Here is what he had to say about predicting the day of Christ's return.

"But, beyond reason inflated [with your own wisdom], ye presumptuously maintain that ye are acquainted with the unspeakable mysteries of God; while even the Lord, the very Son of God, allowed that the Father alone knows the very day and hour of judgment, when He plainly declares, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, neither the Son, but the Father only." If, then, the Son was not ashamed to ascribe the knowledge of that day to the Father only, but declared what was true regarding the matter, neither let us be ashamed to reserve for God those greater questions which may occur to us. For no man is superior to his master." Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Book II Chapter VIII

According to Irenaeus, this knowledge is forbidden and claiming to possess it is equivalent to claiming to be greater than the Master.

Part II Conclusions

I have reviewed the historical arguments presented in *Time of the End* and concluded that they were inadequate. Consequently, I felt the need to supplement Tim's presentation with my own historical research. I found the history of the eschatology of the early church to be fundamentally different than what Tim asserts and I have done my best to set the record straight. In addition, I have examined Tim's claim that strict reliance on the Masoretic Text is the key to discerning an accurate chronology. In my opinion, the evidence overwhelmingly favors the chronological data found in the Septuagint against the Masoretic Text.

Epilog

The Great Disappointment Part II

“I waited all Tuesday, and dear Jesus did not come; I waited all the forenoon of Wednesday, and was well in body as I ever was, but after 12 o'clock I began to feel faint, and before dark I needed some one to help me up to my chamber, as my natural strength was leaving me very fast, and I lay prostrate for 2 days without any pain – sick with disappointment.” – Henry Emmons

Hundreds of thousands of Adventists had gathered in joyful expectation of the return of Christ on October 22, 1844. They had done their duty faithfully. They had proclaimed the Gospel and warned all they could reach that the Day of Judgment was at hand. They had demonstrated their faith by selling all that they had. They had steadfastly refused to betray any doubt by abstaining from planting their crops. Their consciences were clear. But that Tuesday passed and Christ did not appear.

“It is a cloudy and dark day here – the sheep are scattered – and the Lord has not come yet.” – Josiah Litch

“Our fondest hopes and expectations were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping came over us as I never experienced before. It seemed that the loss of all earthly friends could have been no comparison. We wept, and wept, till the day dawn.” – Hiram Edson

“I left the place of meeting and wept like a child.” – James White

It is possible to look back at Miller's teaching and point out the flaws in his exegesis. But it will be more constructive to ask, what happened to the hundreds of thousands of Adventists following the Great Disappointment?

The vast majority, many tens of thousands, abandoned their beliefs. The majority left Christianity altogether. Some returned to their former denominations. Some continued to believe the message and set new dates. Some reinterpreted the meaning of the “*cleansing of the sanctuary*” as a pre-advent judgment on the Christian church and formed new denominations. This is the origin of the Advent Christian Church and the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Needless to say, the Adventists who gave away their livelihoods or failed to plant their fields that year suffered tremendous economic hardship. The emotional and spiritual wreckage, and the personal cost to individual lives, families, and relationships is incalculable. Lives were truly destroyed. The faith of many was shipwrecked. That has happened every single time in the history of the church when men have claimed to have discovered the time of the end. People inevitably make major life decisions that prove to be disastrous when the prediction fails. That is why this matters and that is why, after

having investigated Tim's conclusions for my own personal needs, I have chosen to publish this review.

I believe I demonstrated in Sections A and B that chiliasm has no firm foundation in the Scriptures. In Section A I showed that in order for Tim to escape the straightforward statements of the Lord that no one knows that day and hour, it was necessary for him to retranslate it using definitions of words and rules of grammar that are entirely his own invention and that cannot stand under scrutiny. In Section B I showed that Tim faces two insurmountable twin obstacles: an utter absence of Scriptural evidence for the Millennial Week and a wealth of evidence that is contrary to, and incompatible with, the Millennial Week. The Lord commanded us to perpetually watch and to be ready with the firm conviction that He might return within our lifetimes and this is true for every generation of believers. Whether we live to see His return or whether we die, we must abide in Him continually.

I believe I demonstrated in Sections C-E that historically chiliasm can be traced to Jewish myths, false prophecy, and Greek philosophy, things the apostles warned us against. In Section C I demonstrated that Tim's handling of the historical evidence in the early church was incomplete, out of context, and lacked objectivity. In Section D, I provided my own chronological survey of the eschatology of the early church fathers in which I was able to trace exactly when and by whom chiliasm entered the church and how it subsequently evolved. In addition, none of the chiliasts taught what Tim claims they taught. Their chiliasm was based on wild and fanciful allegorical interpretations and all of them without exception believed in a heavenly destiny. Since the allegorical methods by which the early chiliasts explained the doctrine could not be used by Tim, he ignores them and attempted to come up with his own argument from the Scriptures. That attempt in my opinion failed. In Section E, I presented a case for the primacy of the Septuagint's chronology against the Masoretic Text.

I have pointed out dozens of exegetical, logical, and historical fallacies in *Time of the End*, most of which are independently serious enough to undo Tim's prediction. It is up to each one of us to evaluate this evidence. I conclude that chiliasm is not part of the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

One of the unintended fruits of William Miller's teaching was to isolate his followers from the rest of the Body of Christ. He did not intend this. He intended for his followers to remain faithful members of their churches and to spread the warning of the soon coming of Christ within those fellowships and denominations. Most attempted to do this but inevitably came into conflict with their denominations and there was a gradually accelerating exodus from the churches as the Adventists preferred the company of those who were likeminded. By the time of the predicted end, the Adventists were isolated.

Tim's teaching is having the same effect on his followers, but unlike William Miller, Tim actively encourages his followers to leave their churches. They are part of the Body of

Christ but they are completely isolated and this isolation is intentional. It is also destructive. They spend their time continually finding fault with all other churches, fellowships, and denominations. To be sure, many of the criticisms are justified. The Body of Christ is imperfect. But the effect of this perpetual fault finding is that Tim's followers quickly become incapable of functioning as members of any church. All they can see are the faults and blemishes and they have forgotten that "*knowledge puffs up but love builds up.*" Consequently, they are, in the words of Irenaeus, "*lost among brambles.*" Paul instructed us that no member of the Body of Christ can say to any other member, "*I have no need of you.*" (1 Corinthians 12:21) We DO need each other.

There will be a last generation of Christians before Christ's advent. We could be that generation and I sincerely hope that we are. But I do not know it and neither does Tim. Only God knows. And for that conclusion I have the words of Jesus. "*But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.*"

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