

Chapter 6 Judeo-Christian Eschatology

Judeo-Christian eschatology (the doctrines of last things) teaches that there will be a rapture of the Church in the very near future followed by a 7 year period of a "Great Tribulation." During this "Tribulation," a world leader will arise known as The Antichrist and he will demand that all people receive a mark in their forehead or hand, the number, 666. There will be much war and huge amounts of people will be murdered and destroyed. At the end of the 7 years, the Lord will return from heaven with His saints and overthrow the Antichrist and instigate the Great White Throne judgment. After this, the eternal existence of Heaven and Hell begins.

This doctrine originated with the erroneous interpretation of chapter 9 of the book of Daniel. Those believing in this interpretation teach that the final 7 year period of Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy was suspended and moved to the end of time. To see how this was done, we need to review some of the verses related to this initial step in Daniel's prophecy.

[24] Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. [25] Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. [26] And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. [27] And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. Daniel 9:24-27

Most scholars agree that Daniel's 70 weeks were 70 weeks of years and total a time span of 490 years. There is argumentation on when this period started but that isn't the issue here. We need to see if the last 7 year period was removed to the end of time and find if there's any justification for such an interpretation.

What dispensationalists believe is that the pronoun, he, at the beginning of verse 27, refers back to, "the prince that shall come." They contend that this prince is the Antichrist and he shall **confirm** the Old Covenant with the Jews for this 7 year period and after 3 ½ years, "the midst of the week," he shall cause their newly revived sacrifices to cease.

The first point of contention I have with this theory is that the pronoun, he, does not refer back to, "the prince that shall come." In this prophecy, Daniel is talking about the Messiah and the mention of, "the prince that shall come," is parenthetical to the discussion. To suggest that the pronoun does not refer back to the Messiah would cause the statements to be confusing and disjointed. One would never mention two subjects and then continue their discussion by using the word, he, else you could never know which subject was being referenced. There is one subject of Daniel's discussion and it is the Messiah. He is not discussing the, "prince that shall

come,” but only mentions him as he is describing the calamity that would come upon Jerusalem which would be brought about by “**the people** of the prince that should come;” his army. This happened in 70 AD when Titus and his army destroyed Jerusalem and razed it to the ground.

The second problem I have with this erroneous interpretation is that it breaks one of God’s time cycles. Time cycles were started at creation and revealed to us as God continued to speak to his people and also through His prophets. The first time cycle was that of the weekly Sabbath. God told us that we are to work 6 days and on the 7th day, we are to rest. This is reiterated when He gave His law to Moses; remember the Sabbath day and keep it Holy. If you decided to work 5 days and rest on the 6th day, you would not be keeping the commandment of God and unlike us, God always keeps His law. Another example of a time cycle is that of the feast days. In Leviticus it states,

In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD’S Passover. Lev. 23:5

If the practice of keeping the Passover had been changed by the people themselves to another day or a different month, then Jesus would not have been crucified on the day of Passover. I think it’s easy to see how the changing of time cycles would cause those cycles to become meaningless.

Every 7 years there was to be a land Sabbath wherein God’s people are supposed to let the land lie fallow and not till it. Then, after 7 of these land Sabbaths, a year of Jubilee was to be declared; after a period of 49 years. Ten Jubilee cycles equals 490 years which is the figure Daniel used in his prophecy. This 490 year time cycle appears over and over throughout Scripture and to break it is to make it of no significance.

Lastly, the prophecy of Daniel mentions the fact that, “he,” will confirm the covenant with many for one week. The reference is not to the sacrifices only as many seem to believe, but is in reference to the entire Mosaic covenant. The only one who can confirm the covenant would be God Himself and since Jesus was God in the flesh, He could confirm or strengthen the covenant during this time period. He strengthened the covenant by writing God’s laws on our hearts and in our minds. If this prophecy is referring to the Antichrist of Judeo-Christian theology, he would have no authority to confirm a covenant made by God.

The Law of God requires a matter to be established by two or three witnesses and the second witness He has placed in his word is that of His numerology, *gematria*. This truth was virtually unknown when many of these fundamentalist doctrines were formulated but it can be used to show how absurd some of these concepts appear to be. For an excellent explanation of the various time cycles used in Scripture, you should read Dr. Stephen Jones’ book, “Secrets of Time.” Dr. Jones explains that this 490 year period is a time of forgiveness and he refers to it as blessed time.

Jesus himself referred to this time cycle when He was asked how many times we are to forgive someone who wrongs us and He replied, even unto 70 times 7 or 490 times. (Matt. 18:22) This is the number of times that God forgives His people before bringing judgment if they fail to repent. Once each year on the day of Atonement, the High Priest would offer a sacrifice for the entire nation and God promised He would forgive the nation and allow them another year of existence. God would not bring His judgment seven years early or put it off until the end of time. After forgiving them 490 times, He brought judgment. Had God subtracted 7 years from this prophecy, He could not have brought judgment upon Judah according to His own laws and we know that judgment was brought on Judah.

Before this 7 year Tribulation period begins, dispensationalists teach that the church will be raptured (taken up) into heaven. During their 7 years of being with the Lord, they will celebrate the “marriage feast of the lamb.” The church is even referred to by them as, The Bride of Christ. The verses of Scripture used to support this concoction is found in Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians.

[13] But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. [14] For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which **sleep** in Jesus will God bring with him. [15] For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. [16] For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the **dead** in Christ shall rise first: [17] Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 1 Th. 4:13-17,

The expression, “to meet the Lord in the air,” does not mean to fly off to heaven and be with the Lord. The single word, “meet,” when used here is used only three other times in the New Testament. It always carries with it the idea of meeting someone and escorting them to your place of abode or some other prearranged spot. The ten virgins went out to meet the bridegroom and escort him to the wedding feast and Paul, on his journey to Rome, told of how the brethren came out to meet him and escort him into the city. We shall meet the Lord in the air but it is to escort Him onto the earth.

God has never removed His people as a way of keeping them from harm’s way. The three young men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego who were thrown into a furnace did not escape the fire. God was with them in the midst of the fire. God was with Daniel in the lion’s den and brought him through safely and without harm. God brought the prophets through the fires of testing and has done the same for countless millions of saints. It is wishful thinking and pleasantries to think that God is going to remove His people from a time of tribulation. Such a concept shows a complete lack of faith in God and His ability to protect and deliver His people from any calamity or circumstance. Even if I believed in a 7 year tribulation period, I would not believe that God would remove His people from it.

During this 7 year tribulation period we are further led to believe by fundamentalist doctrine that a world ruler will arise and he will be referred to as The Antichrist. I also find this concept an amazing conclusion on the part of Judeo-Christian theologians. The term, antichrist, is used only by the apostle John in two of his epistles and if you read the verses carefully you will see that it is pluralistic.

[18] Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now there are **many antichrists**; whereby we know that it is the last time. [19] **They** went out from us, but **they** were not of us; for if **they** had been of us, **they** would no doubt have continued with us: but **they** went out, that **they** might be made manifest that **they** were not all of us. (Plural) 1 Jn. 2:22; Who is a liar but he who denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. 1 Jn. 2:18, 19,

How many denied that Jesus was the Christ in John’s time? (Plural)

And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is in the world. 1 Jn. 4:3

How many spirits denied that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh? (Plural)

For **many deceivers** are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. (Plural) 2 Jn. 1:7

John also does not write these verses referring to **THE Antichrist**. He does not use antichrist as a proper noun and if he had been referring to an “end-time” world ruler he would have specifically referred to him as **THE Antichrist**. John does say, “**an antichrist**,” once again implying many.

It seems pretty clear to me that the spirit of antichrist was in the Pharisees and they convinced many others to believe that Jesus was not the Christ, the son of God come in the flesh. That same spirit has continued down through the centuries and is with us today. To conclude that these verses refer to an end-time world ruler is a leap of faith at best and a delusion at worst.

I also find it strange that John was the only writer who used this term and yet in the book of Revelation, which John penned, he never uses the term or even refers to a world ruler. And in all the writings of Paul, no mention is ever made of an end-time world ruler known as The Antichrist. To leap to the conclusion that Paul’s reference to, “...that man of sin....,” is in reference to The Antichrist is again just unscholarly conjecture. (See, 2 Thess. 2:3)

I found a much more intelligent explanation of this verse in Barnes’ notes of the New Testament wherein he provides many ideas espoused before him and then provides his own understanding. This term used by Paul, “that man of sin,” is understood to be a reference to the carnal nature of man at its worst. And because Paul uses it as occurring after a, “falling away,” Barnes felt it was in reference to the Papacy. As stated earlier, this, “falling away,” from the true faith and teaching of the Apostles doctrines occurred approximately 350 years after Christ when the Catholic church attained prominence in Christendom. He then lists a long line of Popes who were not only criminal but degenerate as well.

Pope Vagilius waded to the pontifical throne through the blood of his predecessor. Pope Joan (the Roman Catholic writers tell us) a female in disguise, was elected and confirmed Pope, as John VIII. Platina says, that “she became with child by some of those that were round about her; that she miscarried, and died on her way from the Lateran to the temple.” Pope Marcellinus sacrificed to idols. Concerning Pope Honorius, the council of Constantinople decreed, “We have caused Honorius, the late Pope of Old Rome, to be accursed; for that in all things he followed the mind of Sergius the heretic, and confirmed his wicked doctrines.” The Council of Basil thus condemned Pope Eugenius: “We condemn and depose Pope Eugenius, a despiser of the holy canons; a disturber of the peace and unity of the church of God; a notorious offender of the whole universal church; a Simonist; a perjurer; a man incorrigible; a schismatic; a man fallen from the faith, and a willful heretic.

Pope John II, was publicly charged at Rome with incest. Pope John XIII usurped the Pontificate, spent his time in hunting, in lasciviousness, and monstrous forms of vice; he fled from the trial to which he was summoned, and was stabbed, being

taken in the act of adultery. Pope Sixtus IV licensed brothels at Rome. Pope Alexander VI was, as a Roman Catholic historian says, “one of the greatest and most horrible monsters in nature that could scandalize the holy chair. His beastly morals, his immense ambition, his insatiable avarice, his detestable cruelty, his furious lusts, and monstrous incest with his daughter Lucretia, are, at large, described by Guicciardini Ciaconius, and other authentic papal historians.” Of the popes, Platina (a Roman Catholic) says: The chair of Saint Peter was usurped, rather than possessed, by monsters of wickedness, ambition, and bribery. They left no wickedness unpracticed; see the New Englander, April, 1844, pp. 285, 286.

This seems to be a much more plausible explanation in light of the fact that Paul’s description of the nature of, “the man of sin,” immediately follows his reference to this person.

Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. 2 Th. 2:4,

I’ve read several accounts of Popes who claimed that their word and dictates were superior even to Scripture. To believe that the “man of sin” is man’s carnal nature is more sensible than to say that this verse is referring to **THE** Antichrist.

Finally, we were led to believe that this Antichrist was going to cause everyone who would not worship him to receive a mark in their forehead or hand which is the number, 666. I have found that it is a good practice when you are researching anything in Scripture to go to its original use in the Word itself.

Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. Deut. 11:18

Here we have the first reference in Scripture to a sign upon the forehead and upon the hand. The Pharisees thought that God meant this literally and made phylacteries and bound them with leather thongs around their foreheads and around their wrists. He actually wanted them to do what He would do under the New Covenant, to write His laws upon their hearts and upon everything they set their hands to do.

Another significant point about this number, 666, is that it is the number of a man. I think most Christians will agree that 6 has been the number of man since the time of creation and the fact that it is here tripled expresses completeness and is emphatic. The number 666 implies doing everything that one does according to man’s reasoning or man’s methods. If you accept man’s religious system, man’s government and man’s economy, you have already received the mark. If your thoughts are wrapped up in man’s way of doing things, including our political system, our way of acquiring property and wealth and man’s “religious” churches, you have the mark. There is coming a time very soon when you will not be able to buy or sell if you do not have the mindset of 666.

Books such as, “The Late Great Planet Earth,” and “Left Behind” have made millions of dollars for their authors but there’s not a shred of truth in them. Lumping together isolated verses that have nothing to do with each other and creating a doctrine from the flimsiest of “evidence” seems to be standard practice for most Judeo-Christian “theologians.” For those who

think that some leader is going to tattoo everyone or implant a chip into their hands, I think you have missed the mark.

Suggested reading, audio and video:

“Secrets of Time” by Stephen Jones

http://www.gods-kingdom-ministries.org/book_list.cfm