



versus
A.D. 70

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Examining Realized Eschatology

TRUTH or ERROR?



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Have you ever wondered?

- Did Christ's second coming occur in A.D. 70 at the destruction of Jerusalem?
- Are we still living in the "last days"?
- Will there be a Final judgment and destruction of the world by fire?
- Is this just a harmless opinion or a damnable heresy?

Part 1: Introduction

The New Testament abounds in warnings concerning false teachers and false teaching. Through the pen of inspiration the apostle Peter says, "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..." (2 Peter 2:1). The apostle John adds, "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 Jn. 4:1) Paul warned the elders of the church at Ephesus false teachers would "come in" from without and also from "among yourselves" (Acts 20:29-30).

What is the mission of these false teachers? They will speak "perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves" (Acts 20:30). One would think Christians could easily spot such teachers and teaching since they are described as teaching "perverse things" (Acts 20:30) and "damnable heresies" (2 Pet. 2:1). But the Lord Himself warns: "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves." (Matt. 7:15) Such people are subtle using "smooth words and flattering speech" and if we do not exercise extreme caution we will become their booty (Col. 2:8). Therefore, we must "contend earnestly for the faith" (Jude 3) by not letting their teaching go unchallenged. We must put it to the test to see if it can withstand the light of God's truth (1 Jn. 4:6). With these thoughts in mind, in this tract we will examine the primary tenets of *Realized Eschatology*.

1) **What Is It?** The *realized eschatology* theory is also known as "A.D. 70 Doctrine" or the "Preterist View." In this tract we will refer to it using the more formal term *realized eschatology*; and abbreviate it as "RE." According to the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* *eschatology* is the "doctrine of the last things, is meant the ideas entertained at any period on the future life, the end of the world (resurrection, judgment; in the New Testament, the Parousia), and the eternal destinies of mankind." The word *realized* simply means "accomplished or completed." RE is thus the doctrine of *completed last things*. It asserts the end times were *realized* or completely accomplished in A.D. 70 when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem. According to RE all the prophecies of the New Testament concerning the second coming of Christ, the final judgment, the resurrection of the dead, the destruction of the earth and material universe, etc. were fulfilled in A.D. 70. Thus, RE claims there are no prophecies in the Bible that are yet to be fulfilled—absolutely none! RE advocates also claim, but are unable to prove, that all the books of the New Testament were written before A.D. 70.

2) **Where Did It Originate?** Like all false doctrines RE's origination and roots are shrouded in mystery. The earliest documented writings on the subject were those of James S. Russell (1787) a denominational writer. However, of late, a 'gospel' preacher by the name of Max R. King has become RE's undisputed champion. King has written a book 'explaining' RE entitled *The Spirit of Prophecy* which was published in 1971 and revised in 2002. In this series of articles references to the 1971 edition will be noted as "SOP-1" and the 2002 edition as "SOP-2." King has also written a second book on the subject, *The Cross and the Parousia of Christ* (1987). King and his cohorts have even gone so far as to have this doctrine trademarked as *Transmillennialism*®.

3) **What Does It Teach?** RE is no mere harmless theory or "preacher fuss." It has far-reaching and dire consequences upon the faith of Christians and the unity of the body of Christ. King's book on RE, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, contains a multitude of false teachings. To answer every error in that book would require many volumes to be written. Furthermore, there are other "branches" of RE, not unlike other false theories (e.g., Calvinism, premillennialism). Therefore, in this tract we will limit ourselves to a discussion of what I consider to be the major errors of the RE theory as taught by Max R. King. These errors are:

Destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70



Part 1: Introduction



Max R. King

A) **Christ's Second Is Coming Past:** RE teaches the second coming of Christ is not the Lord's yet future coming at the end of time, end of the world, and final judgment; but was Christ's coming in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Consider King's own words:

"There is no scriptural basis for extending the second coming of Christ beyond the fall of Judaism" (SOP-1, p. 105)

B) **Final Judgment Is Past:** RE teaches the end of the world and final judgment are not yet in the future, but took place when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman armies in A.D. 70. Consider King's own words:

"The world reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men (i.e., 2 Pet. 3:7, cvt) was the Jewish world." (SOP-1, p. 131)

C) **End of the World Is Past:** RE teaches the end of the world is not the destruction or passing away of the earth and the material universe. Rather, it is the passing away of Judaism which was accomplished, hence *realized*, at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Consider King's own words:

"The world marked for destruction in prophecy, the end of which involved the second coming of Christ and resulted in the true redemption of Israel, was the Jewish world. Therefore it is the end of the Jewish world and not this material earth we live on today." (SOP-1, p. 83)

D) **Spiritual Adultery:** RE condones spiritual adultery since it teaches both the Old and New Covenants were in force between the cross and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Consider King's own words:

"...the Old Covenant world continued several years after the cross. Its final end came with the fall of Jerusalem, and this event marked the passing of heaven and earth." (SOP-2, p. 298)

E) **Denies the Resurrection of the Dead:** Perhaps the most grievous error of RE is its denial of the resurrection of the dead. RE teaches the resurrection of the dead is not a literal resurrection of the physical body of human beings from the grave. On the contrary, RE teaches the resurrection was a figurative resurrection of the church from the suppression of persecution at the hands of Judaism. Consider King's own words:

"...the expected eschatological resurrection was the translation of the children of God from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant (2 Cor. 3:18)." (SOP-2, p. 309)

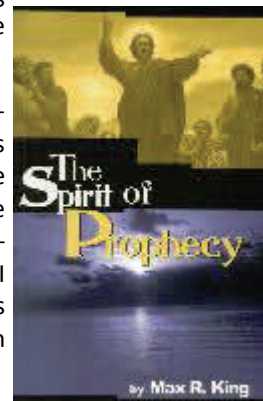
And,

"The church was in the grave or casket of Judaism until the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem." (King's statement in a debate with Gus Nichols, 1973)

In this tract we will examine each of these five major errors of the RE theory. We encourage and admonish everyone to read these points very carefully and read and study all the scripture references (Acts 17:11). The errors of RE are very serious. RE preaches "*a different gospel*" (Gal. 1:6) from that which is revealed in the New Testament. Those teaching RE are guilty of twisting the scriptures and deceiving unwary souls (2 Pet. 3:16). And, RE is not of the "*one faith*" or "*one hope*" (Eph. 4:4-5) found in the gospel of Christ.

I hold no personal animosity towards anyone who believes and/or teaches RE. My purpose in writing these articles is twofold: 1) to warn faithful brethren of this "*damnable heresy*." 2) to encourage those in the bondage of RE theory to "*Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith.*" (2 Cor. 13:5)

Finally, before launching into this study of RE there are three items I would like to address. First, before I began my study of RE my perception was that it was a somewhat innocuous and relatively harmless theory about eschatology and not of major importance. Now that I've thoroughly studied RE I have come to a very different conclusion. I'm convinced RE is as rank of a "*damnable heresy*" as they come. In the course of this study I believe any good Bible student with a healthy respect for the inspiration and authority of the scriptures will come to the same conclusion. Second, despite writing dozens of pages on RE, I would still describe my review as *brief*. I say this because the more I dug into RE the more I found, as is true with most false teachings, that it is highly convoluted, confusing, and internally inconsistent. In some respect I would compare my study of RE with exploring the Grand Canyon. The main canyon is



Part 1: Introduction

unmistakable and rather straight forward to explore. However, the Grand Canyon contains a multitude of extremely narrow and winding side canyons that would take even the most experienced explorer months, if not years, to fully investigate. The same is true with RE. The main tenets of RE are quite clear and obvious. However, there are many “side canyons” to RE that if fully explored would literally require volume upon volume to be written. Thus, for the sake of brevity, I’ve chosen to focus on what I perceive as the main issues and even then I do not outline every possible argument to refute them.

At the conclusion of this study I will list a bibliography of both the pro and con A.D. 70 materials I read and studied in the preparation of this tract. I would encourage those with a deeper interest in this subject to consult those books and articles. However, I warn you, especially with the pro A.D. 70 material; you are in for an extremely frustrating experience as you will witness the very pinnacle of scripture twisting.

Third, I sincerely appreciate all of the dedicated writers who have written refutations of A.D. 70 doctrine. I don’t propose to add anything new or improved over what others have already written. However, I hope this tract will help you understand the issues and either provide you with some ammunition to refute RE or, if you are an RE believer, convince you it is a false theory. Many of my arguments were formulated by other writers and I tried my best to put them into my own words or properly document them with direct quotations from the original works. I extend my deepest gratitude and appreciation to these writers as I’ve greatly benefited from the fruits of their studies and do not claim superior scholarship over them.

Part 2: The 2nd Coming of Christ



In the introduction we noted one of the five major errors of RE was its teaching that the second coming of Christ has already occurred. Recall RE teaches the second coming of Christ is not His yet future coming at the end of time, end of the world, and final judgment; but was His coming in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

To confirm this fantastical notion let’s consider some quotes from RE’s champion, Max King:

“There is no scriptural basis for extending the second coming of Christ beyond the fall of Judaism.” (SOP-1, p. 105)

“It is the second coming and it is his coming in the fall of Jerusalem, for these are not two separate comings but one.” (SOP-1, p. 70)

“The end of the Jewish world was the second coming of Jesus Christ.” (SOP-1, p. 70)

“...prophecy found its complete fulfillment in the second coming of Christ (A.D. 70, cvt), and now may be regarded as closed and consummated.” (SOP-1, p. 65)

Are all these things true? Did Jesus’ second coming really take place almost 2,000 years ago, fulfilling all prophecy, as RE asserts?

1) Has Christ Come Again? Did Jesus come in the first century? Undeniably the answer is “Yes”! The Bible tells us He came in several ways:

- A) He came bodily in His incarnation as *“the Word became flesh and dwelt among us”* as *“Immanuel, which is translated, ‘God with us.’”* Jn. 1:1-3, 14; Matt. 1:23
- B) He came *“in His kingdom”* on the day of Pentecost, Matt. 16:28; Acts 2.
- C) He came representatively when He sent the Holy Spirit, Jn. 14:18 (*“I will come to you.”*); Jn. 15:26.
- D) He came in judgment against Jerusalem in A.D. 70, Matt. 24:29-30.
- E) He came in judgment against the powers persecuting the early saints, Rev. 19:11-21.
- F) He came, and will come, to everyone who *“loves”* Him and *“keep[s] My word,”* Jn. 14:23 (cf. Rev. 3:20).
- G) He will *“come”* and remove the *“lampstand”* of unfaithful congregations, Rev. 2:3, 5.

Were any of these “comings” of Jesus in the first century the “second coming”? No! All of the comings listed above, except the first, were not even literal comings where Jesus came *actually, personally* and *visibly*.



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On the contrary, He came *figuratively* and *representatively*, except when He came in the flesh as “Immanuel.”

2) How Does the Bible Describe His Second Coming? Acts 1:9-11 deals a death blow to RE’s assertion the second coming of Christ was His coming in the judgment and destruction of Jerusalem. Acts 1:9-11 reads:

9 And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. 11 They also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.’ (NASU)

In what way did Jesus go into heaven? He went *actually, personally* and *visibly*! This passage is literal language. The apostles “were looking on” when “a cloud received Him out of their sight.” They were not casually “looking,” but “gazing intently into the sky while He was going.” Undoubtedly and undeniably the apostles saw Jesus’ resurrected body ascend into heaven. Now, how was He to return? Was His second coming a figurative, spiritual coming as He came in A.D. 70 in judgment against Jerusalem? No! The angels told the apostles, He “will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.” How did He go into heaven? He went into heaven *actually, personally* and *visibly*. His coming in A.D. 70 was not in that “same way,” but it will happen when He comes in final judgment of the world. Consider Paul’s words in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17:

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. (NKJV)

This passage is in *perfect* agreement with Acts 1:9-11. It describes the Lord’s coming *exactly* as the angels described it in Acts 1:9-11. His yet future second coming in this passage is *actual, personal* and *visible*. It is neither *figurative, spiritual, or representative*. We do not have the space, but 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 also undeniably teaches Christ’s second coming will be *actual, personal* and *visible* (cf. Jn. 14:1-4; 2 Tim. 4:8; Heb. 9:27-28). This did not happen in A.D. 70, but will happen when He comes to judge the world, reward the saints and punish the wicked (cf. Acts 17:31; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Matt. 16:27; 25:31ff).

3) A First Century Second Coming Contradicts Scripture. The quotations from the pen of RE champion Max King undeniably place the second coming of Christ as His coming in judgment against Jerusalem in A.D. 70. It is undeniable He came in judgment of Jerusalem as He Himself promised in Matthew 24:11-28 and which is confirmed by secular historians. But placing Christ’s second and final coming in A.D. 70 contradicts Scripture.

First, Jesus said the destruction of Jerusalem would be preceded by visible signs. (Matt. 24:4-30). Verse 15 tells us these were signs the disciples could “see.” However, the Bible describes Christ’s future second coming as one not preceded by any signs (see Matt. 25:36ff; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10). “But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.” (1 Thess. 5:1-2) Does God’s word say the second coming will be preceded by signs? No! Was His coming in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 preceded by signs? Yes! So it cannot be the second coming in judgment of the world.

Second, Matthew 24 describes the judgment and destruction of Jerusalem was one from which the discerning disciple could “flee” (v. 16). Such cannot be said of His second coming in judgment of the world. At that coming there will be no fleeing because “all nations” will be present (Matt. 25:32). There will be no fleeing because that day is the day in which Paul said, “God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel” (Rom. 2:16). There will be no fleeing because that day is the day in which “all men” will be judged “in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained” (Acts 17:30-31). There will be no fleeing because that day is the day in which “each of us shall give an account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:12). There will be no fleeing because that day is the day in which “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he had done, whether good or bad.” (2 Cor. 5:10) There will be no fleeing because that day is the day in which “the dead, small and great” will stand before God and be judged according to the “Book of Life” and “anyone not found written in the Book of Life” will be “cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:12, 15). There will be no fleeing because that day is the day in which “Death and Hades” will be “cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:14). Honestly, dear friend, did these things take place in A.D. 70? No!

Third, those discerning disciples fleeing the judgment and destruction of Jerusalem were the disciples in “Judea” (Matt. 24:16). Undoubtedly the destruction of Jerusalem was characterized by great and terrible destruction and suffering (Matt. 24:21). But, it was still a localized event. It did not affect the inhabitants of Athens or Rome, it was limited to Jerusalem and Judea. Such cannot be said of His second coming in judgment of the world (Acts 17:30-31; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:11-15).

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Fourth, the judgment and destruction of Jerusalem took place before the generation living at that time had passed away (Matt. 24:34). If indeed this was the “second coming” of Christ, then why did Jesus come figuratively and not *actually, personally and visibly* as promised in Acts 1:9-11? There is no argument that He “came” in A.D. 70, but it was not the “coming” described in other passages such as Matt. 25:31-46; Acts 17:30-31; Rom. 2:16; 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:11-15. The events of the A.D. 70 coming do not fit those described in these passages.

Fifth, at the second coming Jesus, “*the Son of man...shall reward every man according to his works.*” (Matt. 16:27) We will discuss the judgment more fully later in this tract, but did Jesus “*reward every man according to his works*” at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70? Did “*all appear before the judgment seat of Christ*” (2 Cor. 5:10) in A.D. 70? Surely to the inhabitants of Jerusalem there is an application of this passage in the sense they experienced a “judgment.” But what of the inhabitants of Rome, Athens, or Damascus; were they rewarded according to their “works” at that time? No! The judgment of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 was a localized event; it was not the universal judgment that will occur at “*the appointed day*” at the end of time when God “*will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained*” (Acts 17:31).

Sixth, at the second coming of Christ the “*last enemy...will be destroyed...death*” (1 Cor. 15:26, 52-54). I don’t mean to sound flippant, but have the funeral parlors went out of business? No! Death still haunts mankind every day of the week. It is true that through His death, Jesus “*released*” those who would be Christians from “*the fear of death*” (Heb. 2:15). This happened at the cross (Heb. 2:14) not in A.D. 70! Death remains until the day of judgment when the “*last trumpet...will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible*” (1 Cor. 15:52). Thus, death was not destroyed in A.D. 70. RE is once again found to be false in its biblical interpretations.


Seventh, at the second coming the Lord promises to “*transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body*” (Phil. 3:20-21). Is mankind still shackled with “*lowly*” bodies or blessed with “*glorious*” bodies? Thousands of “*lowly*” bodies go to the grave each hour! Such being the case, then the coming of Jesus in A.D. 70 was not His second coming. His second coming is yet future and something for which every faithful saint awaits “*eagerly.*”

Eighth, according to 1 Thessalonians 4:15 at “*the coming of the Lord*” “*God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus*” (v. 14). Did that happen in A.D. 70? No! None of the events in this passage (vv. 13-18) took place in A.D. 70. Will they occur someday? Yes, at the yet future second coming of Christ.

Ninth, according to 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 at the second coming of Christ, Jesus will be “*revealed from heaven*” and “*in flaming fire*” take “*vengeance on those who do not know God and those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” Furthermore, those ungodly folks “*shall be punished with everlasting destruction.*” This passage also tells us from that point onward the faithful will no longer suffer persecutions (v. 7). Do “*those who do not know God and those who do not obey the gospel*” still live among us? Absolutely! Plus, persecution of Christians continues today. These events did not take place in A.D. 70, therefore, RE is once again proved wrong in regards to the Lord’s second coming.

Tenth, in 1 Corinthians 11 Paul instructs Christians concerning the partaking of the Lord’s Supper. The observance of this holy memorial has several meanings and purposes. However, how long did Paul, through inspiration, say Christians are to partake of the supper? Paul says in observing the supper we “*proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes*” (v. 26). If Jesus’ second coming was in A.D. 70 Christians no longer have the authority to observe the supper! But, to my knowledge, those holding to RE still partake of the supper. There is an obvious inconsistency between their beliefs and practices.

Make no mistake, there are more contradictions concerning the second coming between RE and the Bible for which we have not the space to fully discuss; for example: A) RE denies that all the dead will be raised at the second coming (Jn. 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; 1 Cor. 15:50-54), B) RE denies that at Christ’s second coming all the righteous will be caught up in the air to meet the Lord and live with Him forever (1 Thess. 4:17), C) RE denies every eye shall see the Lord at His second coming (Rev. 1:7; Col. 3:4), D) RE denies at His second coming all tears, sorrow and dying will come to an end (Rev. 21:4), and E) RE denies at His second coming the material universe will be destroyed (2 Pet. 3:10-13).



**“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him.”
(Rev. 1:7)**

4) Conclusion. The teaching of RE regarding Christ’s second coming is clearly at odds with what the Bible teaches and is guilty of twisting the scriptures and deceiving unwary souls (2 Pet. 3:16). We care deeply about the souls of everyone caught up in RE doctrine, but must plainly and unequivocally label it for what it is: a “*damnable heresy*” (2 Pet. 3:1). Why? It preaches “*a different gospel*” (Gal. 1:6) from the one revealed in the New Testament. It is not the “*one faith*” or “*one hope*” (Eph. 4:4-5) found in the gospel of Christ. We urge all caught up in this doctrine to “*ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls.*” (Jer. 6:16) Brethren and friends, make no mistake about it, “*To those who eagerly wait for Him*

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He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation” (Heb. 9:28). Don’t let RE rob you of “the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13) that will come on that “appointed...day” (Acts 17:31).

Part 3: The Final Judgment

In the introduction we noted one of the major errors of RE was its teaching that the final judgment has already occurred. Recall RE teaches that in A.D. 70 the world experienced the second coming of Christ, the end of the ‘world,’ the final judgment and the destruction of the ‘world.’ This point needs to be crystal clear: RE teaches there will NOT be a universal judgment day at the end of time in which all men/women will appear before God and give an account of their lives. Consider this quotation from RE’s champion Max King that is relevant in regards to the final judgment:



“A future judgment is no more needed than a future cross.” (SOP-1, p. 80)

Is this true? Did Jesus’ second coming in “final judgment” really take place almost 2,000 years ago as RE asserts? Before going further it is clear God has exercised “judgments” against individuals, peoples, and nations throughout history; from the flood in the days of Noah to the many judgments against nations described, for example, in the first thirty nine chapters of Isaiah to the judgment against Jerusalem prophesied by the Lord in Matthew 23 and described in the first thirty five verses of Matthew 24. But,

- 1) **Has the Final Judgment Taken Place?** Did the *final judgment* take place in A.D. 70 as claimed by RE doctrine? Or, is the *final judgment* yet to take place in the future? Let’s consider several *final judgment* passages and see which view is in agreement with God’s word:

A) *Old Testament:*

Ecclesiastes 1:9: “Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; but know that for all these God will bring you into judgment.” Is Solomon describing a localized judgment such as occurred in A.D. 70? How could a young man in Solomon’s day ever have any hope of understanding the interpretation supplied by RE teaching? Such a young man would never see the ‘judgment’ that occurred in A.D. 70! Thus Solomon’s warning must have a much broader meaning.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.” This passage finds several parallels in the New Testament, for example 2 Corinthians 5:10 (see discussion below) and speaks of a judgment in which “every” work we have done will one day be judged. The only *judgment* that could possibly fit such a scenario is a *universal* judgment. A localized judgment, such as that in A.D. 70 against Jerusalem, falls far short of the demand of such passages (cf. Dan. 7:9-10).

B) **New Testament:** As we begin discussing New Testament (NT) *final judgment* passages let us keep in mind an important principle of interpretation: when a term is correctly defined, the definition can be substituted for the word and the passage will still make sense. For example, the *church* is the *body of Christ*. It may be a bit awkward at times, but one could substitute *body of Christ* in every passage referring to the Lord’s church and every good Bible student would understand exactly what was being said. The same is true with the word *judgment*. If indeed the *final judgment* occurred in A.D. 70 at the destruction of Jerusalem; then every passage containing the word *judgment* that RE doctrine says refers to the *final judgment*; should make just as much sense if *destruction of Jerusalem* is substituted for *judgment*. Let’s examine just a few NT passages in that manner.

Matthew 5:21-22: “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’ But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.” Note that Jesus equates “in danger of judgment” with “in danger of hell fire.” First, does it make sense in v. 21 to replace “in danger of the judgment” with “in danger of the destruction of Jerusalem”? No! Second, if, as RE doctrine demands, the final judgment occurred in A.D. 70, “hell fire” must refer to the burning of Jerusalem by the Romans. To maintain consistency RE would then have to deny an eternal “hell fire” since it already took place some 2,000 years ago.

Part 3: The Final Judgment

Matthew 12:36: *"But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment."* Was the Lord suggesting that persons speaking "idle" words would give an account to the Romans at "the destruction of Jerusalem"? What about the "idle" words men speak today? Such a view reduces the Bible to utter nonsense.

Matthew 11:21-24: *"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. 23 And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you"* Was Jesus saying there would be more toleration for Tyre and Sidon at the *destruction of Jerusalem* than for the cities of Judea? Furthermore, this passage implies citizens of these ancient cities will be present "in the day of judgment." Were they present at the *destruction of Jerusalem*? No! This passage, as well as others, imply all people will be present at the final judgment; people that lived in the ancient past, recent past, present and future will all be there (e.g., Matt. 25:32; Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10). This passage also makes it clear the true *final judgment* will not be a localized judgment like the destruction of Jerusalem, but a universal judgment.

Matthew 12:41-42: *"The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here. 42 The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here."* This passage undeniably tells us "in the judgment" the "men of Nineveh" and the "queen of the South" would condemn "this generation" for their unwillingness to repent at the preaching of Jesus. Did the Lord do this at the *destruction of Jerusalem*? No! That "coming" was a figurative coming limited to the destruction of Jerusalem, it was not the universal judgment promised by scripture.

Acts 17:30-31: *"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."* In this passage Paul is speaking to the citizens of Athens, some 780 miles distant from Jerusalem. This is not far by today's standards, perhaps less than two hours by air, but in that day it was a journey requiring weeks or even months. Think very carefully: who is going to be judged on the day God appointed? Jerusalem only? No, "all men everywhere" are told "to repent" because "the world" is going to be judged! Not just Jerusalem, but "the world." If one were going to express the universality of judgment could you think of any better words to do so? Furthermore, what is the motivation for "all men everywhere to repent"? That certainly included the Athenians. But it would also include the men of Japan, Australia, Turkey, *ad infinitum* to include "all the nations" (see Matt. 25:32). Were the Japanese or Turks judged in A.D. 70? What possible interest would they, or the Athenians, have in the destruction of Jerusalem? What reaction do you suppose the men of Athens would have had if they understood Paul's statement to be limited to Jerusalem? Again, not to be flippant, but I imagine they would have said something like, "Who cares!" or "Big deal!" The judgment in this passage has to be of much wider scope to have any hope of motivating the Athenians to repent. RE reduces plain Bible passages to absurdity.

Romans 14:10b: *"For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."* Did "all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70? No! But when "All the nations will be gathered before Him" (Matt. 25:32) that can be said. Further, when men "stand before the judgment seat of Christ" they will be awestruck with the fact of who Jesus really is, and that they must "give account...to God." It is then that "Every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." (Rom. 14:11) Does it make sense to limit these passages to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70? Or, does it make more sense that the passage refers to a worldwide, age-spanning, universal final judgment? Surely even a neophyte Bible student would conclude the latter and reject the former.

2 Corinthians 5:10-11a: *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. 11 Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men..."* Paul directs this statement to the brethren at Corinth. Corinth is located about 860 miles from Jerusalem. It flies in the face of reason to insist, as does the RE theory, that Paul was discussing the destruction of Jerusalem. Like the Athenians, the concerns of the Corinthian brethren would be limited. Since these people were Christians I'm fairly confident they would be concerned that the saints in Jerusalem would be able to safely escape the coming calamity. But, Paul could easily have eased those fears by informing them of the signs and instructions given by the Lord in Matthew 24. Further, Paul describes the stark reality that "we must all appear before the judgment seat



Part 3: The Final Judgment

of Christ” as the “terror of the Lord.” As a result of that terrifying reality, Paul sought to “persuade men.” Persuade what men? Paul’s primary audience was Gentiles. What interest would the average Gentile have in the destruction of Jerusalem? What “terror” could the destruction of Jerusalem possibly strike in the hearts of Gentiles that would persuade them to repent? The application of this passage by RE advocates is just another attempt to “shoe horn” a passage in a vain attempt to make it fit a fanciful theory.

Hebrews 9:27: “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment...” Let’s try our word exchange on this passage: “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the destruction of Jerusalem...” It doesn’t make sense. But the original passage does make sense when taken in context with the following verse (v. 28): “so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.” Note the order in these passages: first there is a death, then at some point in the future there is a judgment. This passage does not fit the destruction of Jerusalem. Many Jews survived the A.D. 70 judgment. Therefore, the judgment came before they died! That does not fit the order of Hebrews 9:27. Why? Because RE theory does not mesh with the truth of God’s word! But, Hebrews 9:27 fits perfectly with v. 28 and other judgment passages. Hebrews 9:28 connects v. 27 with the second coming of Christ. At some point Jesus will return “a second time, not to bear sin” (Heb. 9:28, NIV). The second coming is much different from the first in which He came “to take away our sins” (1 Jn. 3:5). No, at the second coming “He will judge the world in righteousness” (Acts 17:31) and the faithful will receive their eternal “salvation,” their “crown of righteousness” (2 Tim. 4:8). This did not happen in A.D. 70.

***“And it is appointed unto men
once to die, but after this the
judgment.”***

—Hebrews 9:27

2 Peter 2:4: “For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment...” The passage is dealing with the judgment of angels, and the parallel passage in Jude tells us these angels are “reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6). God has sequestered the sinful angels in hell until the “judgment of the great day.” But RE theory tells us the final judgment occurred in A.D. 70. How many angels were judged in A.D. 70? How many angels were destroyed in that event?

2 Peter 2:9: “then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment...” If the final judgment occurred in A.D. 70 as RE theory teaches, where are the “unjust” that died after A.D. 70 being punished? Are they in *gehenna*? If so, where is the Biblical evidence?

Revelation 20:4-10:

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.

RE theory says this passage was fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. But, the “small and great” did not “stand before God” in A.D. 70. The “dead” were not judged from the “book of life” in A.D. 70. At the final judgment the “devil... was cast into the lake of fire” (v. 10). If this be true then is the devil still our “adversary”? Does he still “walk about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour”? As I live my life, and look out on the world today, I can testify that, unfortunately, the devil remains alive and active! To remove the final judgment from scripture is to “de-fang” the gospel. It removes the “severity” from the “goodness and severity of God” (Rom. 11:22). It totally removes the motivation Paul described as “the terror of the Lord” which he used to “persuade men” of their need to repent and prepare for the “day” God has appointed “on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained” (Acts 17:30-31). Such a theory paves the way to infidelity and the destruction of a man’s faith.

Part 4: Overlapping Covenants

In the introduction we noted one of the five major errors of RE was its teaching that during the 40-year period from the death of Christ (~A.D. 30) until the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) the old and new covenants were both in effect simultaneously. In RE parlance this 40-year period is called the “*eschaton*.” According to RE, at the death of Christ the old covenant was only “ready to vanish away” (Heb. 8:13). Thus, during the *eschaton* the old and new covenants “overlapped” (Gal. 4:21-31) as the old covenant was being *transformed* into the new. In other words, Jesus’ death on the cross began a process whereby the old covenant began “dying” in order to be “resurrected” as the new covenant in A.D. 70. Consider these quotations from RE’s chief patron, Max King:

“The words ‘ready to vanish away’ are very significant in this passage (i.e., Heb. 8:13, cvt), showing that the Old Covenant world continued several years after the cross. Its final end came with the fall of Jerusalem, and this event marked the passing of heaven and earth.” (SOP-1, p. 298)

“Christianity was in existence before 70 A.D., but it was not yet fully developed and ready to replace the old.” (*McGuiggan-King Debate*, p. 26)

As one reads the arguments promulgated by RE advocates concerning this aspect of their teaching there are many avenues of discussion, much redefinition of word meanings, and a general striving “*about words to no profit*” (2 Tim. 2:14) that makes one intellectually dizzy. One quickly realizes the exercise is akin to eating half-jelled Jell-O with a toothpick. However, after wandering through this confusing maze one very simple, yet profound, fact is clear: RE teaches the old and new covenants overlapped and coexisted during the *eschaton* (~A.D. 30-70).

Let us consider four ways this claim of RE disagrees with what the Bible really teaches.

1) RE’s timeline is wrong and condones spiritual adultery: RE’s focal point for the removal of the old covenant is A.D. 70 while the Bible’s focal point is the cross. In Ephesians 2:14-17 Paul wrote:

14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, **15** having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, **16** and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

Paul identifies the source of the “*enmity*” as “*the law of commandments contained in ordinances*” (v. 15): the Law of Moses. To “*abolish*” means “to render idle, unemployed, inactive, inoperative; to cause to cease, put an end to, do away with, annul, abolish” (Thayer). Thus, Paul describes the abolishment of the Law of Moses, or old covenant, taking place at least 6-8 years before A.D. 70.

The parallel passage of Colossians 2:13-14 clearly identifies the cross as the end of the old covenant not A.D. 70. Once again, listen to the apostle:

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.

Like sabbatarians, RE advocates seek to evade the clear teaching of this passage by claiming “*the handwriting of requirements*” was not the Mosaic Law, but only the bond or agreement by the Jews to keep the ordinances (*The Cross and the Parousia of Christ*, p. 154). Such a tactic doesn’t work because Paul clearly identifies the “*enmity*” that was “*abolished in His flesh*” in Ephesians 3:15 as “*the law of commandments contained in ordinances*.” Even if Paul was referring to “the bond or agreement of the Jews to keep the ordinances” in Colossians 2:15 (which he was not), Ephesians 3:15 leaves no “wiggle room” to sidestep the clear teaching that the Law of Moses ended at the cross. On the contrary, Paul is referring to the Law of Moses in both passages and RE advocates, as they so often do, are desperately trying to evade the clear force of truth in Colossians 2:13-14.

Let us consider more passages that have an important bearing on the timing issue of the end of the old covenant and the beginning of the new. Hebrews 9:16-17 reads:

16 For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. **17** For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives.

When will your father’s will go into effect? Did it go into effect upon his death or 40 years later? You know the answer. When did Jesus’ will go into effect? Did it go into effect upon His death or 40 years later? You know the answer unless you are

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confused by RE theorists.

If RE advocates are correct that the old covenant remained in force until A.D. 70 then truly mankind was subject to two covenants simultaneously. But Romans 7:1-6 tells us this is impossible unless one is a spiritual adulterer. Romans 7:1-6 reads:

1 Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? 2 For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. 3 So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. 4 Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another — to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. 5 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. 6 But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

A woman is “bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives.” She is only free to marry another man “if her husband dies.” What does the death of her husband mean? It means she is free to marry another. Why is she given this freedom? Because when her husband dies “she is released from that law.” But if she “marries another man” while her husband still lives, “she will be called an adulteress.” Why? Because she is still “bound by the law.” Christians are married to Christ (i.e., “to Him who was raised from the dead”). How is that possible? It is only possible if the old covenant is not in force.

In Paul’s illustration the old and new covenants are clearly parallel with the two husbands. In the physical realm a woman cannot be married to another husband unless the first husband dies. If the woman marries the second husband while her first husband remains alive she is guilty of adultery. The same is true in the spiritual realm. To be married to Christ and seek to adhere to the old covenant was to commit spiritual adultery. The Roman Christians (both Gentiles and Jews) were only free to marry Christ because “we have been delivered from the law” (v. 6). Interestingly, “delivered” here is the same Greek word as “abolished” in Ephesians 2:15. The Roman Christians marriage to Christ could only become legitimate once the old covenant was “abolished,” made “null and void” (*Robertson’s Word Pictures in the New Testament*).

RE advocates also twist Hebrews 8:13 in an attempt to prove the old covenant did not end at the cross, but the cross only marked the beginning of a 40-year period in which it began to “vanish away” not ultimately meeting its end until A.D. 70. For example, on page 223 of Max King’s book *The Cross and the Parousia of Christ* he states:

“When the writer of Hebrews wrote (i.e., Heb. 8:13, cvt) the consummation of the old aeon had not taken place. The Old Covenant was ‘ready to vanish away...The phrase ‘is ready to vanish away’ was from the writer’s point of view, an anticipation of the imminent, age-consummating coming of Christ” (i.e., Christ’s coming in A.D. 70).

To the careless Bible student this explanation may possess a whiff of plausibility, but it cannot withstand the examination of sound biblical exegesis. The context of Hebrews 8:13 is a contrast between the old and new covenants as the Hebrew writer quotes from Jeremiah 31:31-34 which was written about 600 years earlier. In Hebrews 8:13 the Hebrew writer is clarifying a point he made previously (Heb. 8:8) when he says:

In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

The question of importance to our discussion is not if the old covenant “is becoming obsolete and growing old” or “is ready to vanish away.” The important question is: When did this happen? RE advocates assert this “vanishing away” occurred during the *eschaton* from A.D. 30-70. However, the text says the obsolescence and vanishing away of the old covenant began at the time when God said, “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah” (see Heb. 8:8 and 8:13).

When did God make this pronouncement? The pronouncement was not made by the Hebrew writer in the first century A.D.; rather it was made by God through the prophet Jeremiah six centuries earlier! So at the very moment 600 years before Christ when God said, “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant,” marked the time when “He has made the first obsolete” and “ready to vanish away.” The law was just a temporary measure serving as a “tutor” until “faith has come” (Gal. 3:25). Once “faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor” (Gal. 3:25), because the “law of commandments contained in ordinances” was “abolished in His flesh” (Eph. 2:15). Once again the RE theory has been weighed in the balance and found wanting.

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Furthermore, the Christians to which the inspired writer addressed the Hebrew epistle had *“been sanctified.”* These Jewish Christians were already *“partakers of the heavenly calling”*; they were already *“partakers of Christ”* (3:1, 14). These Jewish Christians already had a *“great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God”* (Heb. 4:14); they already had a *“High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek”* (Heb. 6:20). Their High Priest (4:14) and Mediator (9:15) was not a prospect to be realized in A.D. 70, but a reality at the time the epistle was written (pre A.D. 70).

So, by which *“will”* then had these folks been *“sanctified”*? Was it the old covenant, the Law of Moses which was dedicated with the sprinkling of animal blood (9:18-22; Ex. 24:3-8) or was it the new covenant which was purchased by the blood of Christ? (Matt. 26:28) The Hebrew writer informs us the old will, the old covenant, the Law of Moses was only *“a shadow of the good things to come”* (10:1). The old covenant could not make *“those who approach perfect”* (10:1) because its sacrifices, *“the blood of bulls and goats,”* could not *“take away sins”* (10:1, 3). Thus, if the Hebrew Christians had been *“sanctified”* by that *“will”* (i.e., the old covenant) their sanctification would rest on a faulty (9:7) and *“obsolete”* (8:13) covenant.

On the contrary, Jesus came to establish a new covenant, which was a *“better covenant...established on better promises”* (8:6). How did He establish this new covenant? He did so through His complete obedience: *“Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.”* And in doing so Jesus took *“away the first (old covenant, cvt) that He may establish the second (new covenant, cvt).”* By which *“will”* then had these folks been *“sanctified”*?

“By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ once for all.” (10:10)

Which will was that? It was certainly not the old covenant, the Law of Moses because that *“will”* was ratified with *“the blood of calves and goats”* (8:19). No, the *“will”* by which these folks were *“sanctified”* was the one established on the shed blood of our Savior (9:15; 12:24; cf. Matt. 26:28). For RE to assert that somehow the old covenant overlapped the new is blatantly false and an affront to God’s great scheme of redemption based on the precious blood of Jesus Christ!

Let’s summarize this point, the Law of Moses, the old covenant, has been *“taken out of the way,”* because it was *“nailed it to the cross”* (Col. 2:14), it was *“abolished in His flesh”* (Eph. 2:15), it had served its purpose as *“our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith”* (Gal. 3:24), so that we *“may be married to another”* (Rom. 7:4), *“so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit”* (Rom. 7:6). If the old and new covenants overlapped during the 40-year period from the cross to A.D. 70 Paul was wrong and his inspired illustration in Romans 7:1-6 becomes nonsensical. If RE is correct Jewish Christians were married to two husbands (covenants) at the same time and were committing spiritual adultery. Who do you believe: the inspired apostle Paul or RE advocates?

2) RE negates the priesthood of Christ: Everyone agrees the Levitical priesthood was an essential feature of the old covenant, the Law of Moses (Ex. 28:41). If RE theorists are correct that the old and new covenants overlapped and the old covenant was not fully and finally abolished until A.D. 70, then it undeniably follows that the Levitical priesthood was a legitimate institution during the 40-year period from A.D. 30 to 70. There is only one problem with that: the Bible clearly teaches that was impossible. Note Hebrews 7:11-13:

11 *Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. 13 For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.*

This passage unequivocally states that in order for Jesus to become a priest there had to be *“a change of the law.”* Jesus was of the tribe of Judah (7:14; Matt. 1:2, 3:2:6; Lk. 3:23-38; Rev. 5:5) *“from which no man has officiated at the altar.”* The law of Moses, the old covenant, only allowed those of the lineage of Aaron, the tribe of Levi, to serve as priests (Ex. 28:41). But after the cross and prior to A.D. 70 God’s word says, *“We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens”* (Heb. 8:1). In fact, at least five times in the book of Hebrews the writer identifies Jesus as High Priest and that His priesthood was in effect at that point in time (i.e., post cross, pre A.D. 70; cf. Heb. 3:1; 4:14-16; 6:20; 7:24-28; 8:1).

This presents an insurmountable problem for RE advocates: If RE’s overlap theory is true, the Levitical priesthood of the old covenant and the priesthood of Christ in the new covenant also overlapped. However, Hebrews 7:11-14 makes it crystal clear it is impossible for the two priesthoods to overlap and coexist. In order for Christ to serve as priest *“of necessity there also was a change in the law”* (Heb. 7:12). After the cross and prior to A.D. 70 the Bible says *“We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens”* (Heb. 8:1). But this could only be true if there had been *“a change of the law.”* Well, there was *“a change in the law,”* because the old covenant, the Law of Moses had been *“abolished”* (Eph. 2:15) at the cross (Col. 2:13-14; Eph. 2:15). This ended the Levitical priesthood (Heb. 7:12) and allowed one who *“belongs to another*

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tribe" (Heb. 7:13) to become *"the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus"* (Heb. 3:1). Once again, RE doctrine is at odds with biblical truth.

3) RE mocks the primary message of the epistle to the Galatians: The epistle to the Galatians makes absolutely no sense whatsoever if RE's old/new covenant overlap theory is correct. Paul warned the Galatian Christians they had turned away from the pure and original gospel of Christ *"to a different gospel"* (1:6). What exactly had they done to bring this serious charge, condemnation and warning? They desired *"to be under the law"* (4:21); they attempted to *"be justified by the law"* (5:4). For them to attempt to follow the Law of Moses was to remain under the *"curse"* of the Law of Moses (3:10).

Paul plainly states *"no one is justified by the law"* (3:11) and *"the law is not of faith"* (3:12). So when did this *"faith"* come of which Paul spoke? In Galatians 3:23-25 Paul writes:

23 But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. 24 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

Prior to the coming of the *"faith,"* *"we were kept under guard by the law,"* the old covenant, the Law of Moses. Why? We were kept there in anticipation of *"the faith which would afterward be revealed"* (3:23). The *"law"* and *"faith"* are two quite different things (3:12). One (*"law"*) is the old covenant, the Law of Moses. The other (*"faith"*) is the new covenant. Justification was not from the Law of Moses (3:11, 24), rather we are *"justified by faith"* (3:24). And, once *"faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor,"* no longer under the old covenant, the Law of Moses. Does that sound like an overlap of covenants to you?

If RE theory is correct about the overlapping of covenants Paul's message to the Galatians was wrong. The Law of Moses would be a legitimate system by which the Galatians could serve God. But Paul, in unequivocal terms, condemns their allegiance to the Law of Moses by telling them they had *"become estranged from Christ...you have fallen from grace"* (Gal. 5:4). Their allegiance to the Law of Moses caused them to be *"hindered...from obeying the truth"* (Gal. 5:7). Now I may not be the sharpest crayon in the box, but this epistle makes it clear to me the RE overlap theory would be condemned by the inspired apostle. Thus, RE theory is a *"different gospel"* (Gal. 1:6) than that taught by the inspired apostles and preaching it makes one *"accursed"* (Gal. 1:8). That may seem like harsh words by some, but my only answer is the answer given by Paul: *"Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?"* (Gal. 4:16)

4) RE mocks the Great Commission preaching of the apostles: The book of Acts records the apostles and other preachers going forth preaching the message of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15-16). Many of the sermons recorded in Acts were presented to primarily Jewish audiences. The consistent message preached is that the Jews *"by lawless hands"* had *"crucified and put to death"* the Son of God (Acts 2:23; 3:13-15; 4:10-11; 5:30; 7:52). Furthermore, this man Jesus whom the Jews had put to death was made *"both Lord and Christ"* (Acts 2:36), thus, salvation could not be found anywhere else, *"for there is no name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12).

Now, all will agree that the events in the book of Acts transpired during the so-called *eschaton* from ~A.D. 30-70. If RE advocates are correct and the old and new covenants overlapped during this time period, were co-existent, and both in force; then the preaching recorded in Acts is strange indeed! Peter pleaded with the Jews on the day of Pentecost to *"Repent...and be baptized"* that very day (Acts 2:38). Ananias implored the *"Hebrew of Hebrews"* (Phil. 3:5) Saul, *"why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord"* (Acts 22:16). Many other similar examples could be cited.

My question is simply this: Why the big hurry? Why the insistence *"there is no name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved"*? These men were inspired by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2) and the Spirit was guiding them into *"all truth"* (Jn. 16:13). If RE is true, surely they knew there was no big rush?! The Jews had 40 years to mull this Jesus business over before making a decision. They were still legitimately, according to RE theory, able to abide in the Law of Moses being guided by the Levitical priests and find acceptance with God.

Why did the Jews get so upset with the New Testament preachers and persecute them so fiercely and vehemently? Was it because these preachers were pushing this Jesus business when in fact there was 40 years in which to make this transition? Or, was it because the Jews understood the apostles' were preaching that the old covenant, the Law of Moses had been *"taken out of the way,"* *"nailed...to the cross"* (Col. 2:14) and *"abolished in His flesh"* (Eph. 2:15). Thus, they were to *"be married to another"* (Rom. 7:4) *"so that [they] should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter"*? (Rom. 7:6) Did their resistance and persecution arise from the former or the latter? The answer is clear and obvious it was the latter unless one is blinded by RE false doctrine.

Part 4: Overlapping Covenants

Conclusion: Much more can be said in connection with this aspect of RE doctrine. Thus, regretfully, below we will examine another aspect of the RE covenant overlap issue by looking at Paul's allegory in Galatians 4:21-31. According to Max King "That allegory of Paul, Galatians 4, is rich in giving us of the key of the Bible" (*A Study of AD 70 Doctrine*, pp. 65-66). Thus, any examination of RE doctrine would be incomplete without examining Paul's allegory. But, make no mistake, the arguments outlined in this article conclusively show the RE overlapping covenant theory does not agree with scripture. RE claims the Bible describes a slow, 40 year *transition* period where both two covenants coexist. However, our examination of scripture has shown the change in covenants is described, not by *transitional* language, but by *replacement* language.

Paul's Allegory

In the introduction we noted one of the major errors of RE was its teaching that during the 40-year period from the death of Christ (~A.D. 30) until the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) the old and new covenants were both in effect simultaneously. In RE parlance this 40-year period is called the "*eschaton*." According to RE, at the death of Christ the old covenant was only "ready to vanish away" (Heb. 8:13). Thus, during the *eschaton* the old and new covenants "overlapped" (Gal. 4:21-31) as the old covenant was being *transformed* into the new. According to RE, Jesus' death on the cross *began a process* whereby the old covenant began *dying* in order to be *resurrected* as the new covenant in A.D. 70.

This aspect of the RE heresy relies heavily on Paul's allegory in Galatians 4:21-31. In fact, according to Max King, RE's interpretation of this allegory is so crucial he calls it "the key of the Bible" and writes:

"...this simple allegory (Gal. 4:21-31) establishes the 'Spirit of Prophecy,' confirming prophecy's fulfillment in the spiritual seed of Abraham through Christ (Gal. 3:16, 26-29), and beyond the fall of Jerusalem these prophecies cannot be extended." (SOP-1, p. 239)

Boiling it down, RE doctrine relies on their unique interpretation of Paul's allegory in a vain attempt to 'prove' two things upon which their doctrine depends:

- ✦ The old and new covenants overlapped, coexisted, and were in force simultaneously during the *eschaton* from A.D. 30-70.
- ✦ Ishmael was Abraham's rightful heir "until" he was "cast out," therefore, the Jews were the rightful heirs of God's promises. Thus, RE claims Paul's allegory proves Christians were given "the place and inheritance of the Jews."

In regards to these points consider the words of RE maestro Max King:

"Christianity was in existence before 70 A.D., but it was not yet fully developed and ready to replace the old." (*McGuiggan-King Debate*, p. 26)

"...that the Jewish age came to a close on Pentecost day is another erroneous concept. This is assumed on the basis that Pentecost was the beginning of the Christian Age. The error is in failing to see the overlapping period of these two ages or dispensations. Ishmael and Isaac co-existed in Abraham's house for a time before Ishmael was cast out. The Jewish Age did not end until their city, temple, and state fell under Roman invasion in A.D. 66-73." (SOP-1, p. 79)

"...Ishmael was the first born and, as such, had the right of primogeniture, a right he maintained at the birth of Isaac, and even thereafter until he was cast out or disinherited." (SOP-1, p. 30)

The Two Covenants - a simple comparison



"For if that first covenant had been faultless..."

- Old covenant (2 Cor. 3:14)
- Given by Moses (Jn. 1:17)
- Given to Israel (Deut. 5:1-3)
- Written on stones (2 Cor. 3:7)
- Shadow of things to come (Heb. 10:1)
- Blood of bulls and goats (Heb. 10:4)
- Animals as dead sacrifices (Heb. 10:1-4)
- Sins remembered each year (Heb. 10:3)
- Same sacrifices offered often (Heb. 10:11)
- Made nothing perfect (Heb. 7:19)
- Fleshly circumcision (Gen. 17:9-11)
- Ministration of condemnation (2 Cor. 3:9)
- Levitical priesthood (Heb. 7:11)
- Not without fault (Heb. 8:7)
- Yoke of bondage (Gal. 5:1-4)
- No justification (Gal. 3:11)
- Abolished (2 Cor. 3:13)

Old Testament



"...then should no place have been sought for the second." (Heb. 8:7)

- New covenant (2 Cor. 3:6)
- Given by Christ (Heb. 1:1-2)
- Given to all (Mt. 28:18-20)
- Written on hearts (2 Cor. 3:3)
- The true (Heb. 8:1-2)
- Blood of Christ (Heb. 9:14)
- Bodies as living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1-2)
- Sins remembered no more (Heb. 8:12)
- Christ offered one sacrifice for all (Heb. 10:12)
- Perfect or complete in Christ (Col. 2:10)
- Circumcision of the heart (Rom. 2:29)
- Ministration of righteousness (2 Cor. 3:9)
- Each Christian a priest (1 Pet. 2:5)
- Perfect law (Jas. 1:25)
- Law of liberty (Jas. 1:25)
- Justifies (Gal. 3:24)
- Remains (2 Cor. 3:11)

New Testament

Designed by Ryan J. Thomas

Part 4: Overlapping Covenants

1) **RE is wrong, the old and new covenants did not overlap, they were not in force simultaneously:** The previous section definitively proved this aspect of RE doctrine is diametrically opposed to plain Bible teaching (please review that section before reading further). In fact, the very allegory in Galatians 4:21-31 RE uses to ‘prove’ their covenant overlapping theory, proves the exact opposite!

To properly understand Paul’s allegory one must take two important truths into account. First, the very purpose of the letter to the Galatians was to admonish the Galatian Christians not to go back to the Law of Moses for justification *“for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”* (Gal. 2:21) In the letter Paul clearly states, *“the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. **25** But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”* (Gal 3:24-25, emphasis mine) Why would Paul say such a thing? Because, the Law of Moses had been abrogated, it had been *“blotted out”* (Col. 2:14), it had been *“taken out of the way”* (Col. 2:14), it had been *“nailed to the cross”* (Col. 2:14-15). It was no longer God’s law for His people (Heb. 8:7-13), because Christ *“fulfilled”* it (Matt. 5:18) by doing God’s will and in doing so *“He taketh away the first (old covenant), that he may establish the second (new covenant).”* (Heb. 10:9) Thus, it is *“by that will”* (new covenant) that *“we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all”* (Heb. 10:10) and *“we have been discharged from the law”* (Rom. 7:6 ASV).

Thus, for Christians to seek justification in the law was to be *“estranged from Christ”* and to *“have fallen from grace”* (Gal. 5:4). Therefore, Christians *“are not under the law”* (Gal. 5:18), but are *“justified by faith”* (Gal. 3:24) and thus *“led by the Spirit.”* The old and new covenants could no more “co-exist” than a woman can be married to two husbands at the same time without being *“called an adulteress”* (Rom. 7:1-6, esp. v. 3). It is no wonder Paul tells the Galatians they had turned to a *“different”* and *“accursed”* gospel (1:6), that they were *“foolish”* and *“bewitched”* (charmed or misled). Their turn to the Law of Moses meant they were not obeying *“the truth”* (Gal. 3:1). The same is true of RE doctrine, it is *“foolish,”* and *“bewitches”* its followers because it is not *“the truth”*!

Second, the very point of Paul’s allegory disproves any overlapping of the old and new covenants. Leading up to the allegory we’ve already seen that Paul made it crystal clear we are no longer *“under”* the old covenant (*“tutor”*) once *“faith has come”* (Gal. 3:25). As we move into chapter four Paul says that to turn back to the Law of Moses was to *“turn again to the weak and beggarly elements”* and is indicative of a desire *“to be in bondage”* (Gal. 4:9). Then Paul introduces the allegory with: *“Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?”* (Gal. 4:21) These and the other words of this letter are not words from an apostle teaching some cockeyed theory of overlapping covenants. They are words of chastisement, admonishment and rebuke that they are no longer under the Law of Moses. The *“faith has come,”* hence, they *“are no longer under a tutor”* (Gal. 3:25), they are no longer under the Law!

Paul uses the allegory, with which every Jewish Christian in Galatia would be familiar, as a fitting illustration to prove this vital point. Hagar represents the old covenant, Sarah represents the new covenant, Ishmael represents the Jews under the old covenant, and Isaac represents Christians under the new covenant (Gal. 4:21-31). The point of the allegory is that the Galatian Christians should not *“desire to be under the law”* because that very law taught the old covenant (Hagar) and son (Ishmael, the Jews) had been *“cast out”* and *“the son (Ishmael) of the bondwoman (Hagar) shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.”* (Gal. 4:30) These folks were in danger of losing their souls (Gal. 5:4) over what RE teaches as sound doctrine!

2) **RE is wrong, Ishmael was never Abraham’s rightful heir and Christians were never given “the place and inheritance of the Jews”:** First, RE advocates claim their overlap theory is correct because of their claim Ishmael “had the right of primogeniture.” According to Dictionary.com *primogeniture*, in this sense, means: *“the system of inheritance or succession by the firstborn, specifically the eldest son.”* Thus, according to RE theory, until Ishmael was “cast out” of Abraham’s house he was Abraham’s rightful heir with his tenure as heir “overlapping” that of Isaac. Hence, according RE, the two covenants overlapped. This claim has one main problem: it is wrong. Ishmael was never the “heir” of God’s promise. Ishmael was never part of God’s plan. Ishmael was the result of a human scheme (Gen. 16), not a divine plan. Read the sacred text my friend, God’s promise was always through the “son of promise” which was Isaac and not Ishmael:

19 Then God said: “No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him. 20 And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. 21 But My covenant I will establish with Isaac” (Gen 17:19-21, emphasis mine).

Ishmael could never be disinherited by Abraham as it concerns the “promise” since he was never an heir of the “promise” to begin with. Furthermore, Sarah cast out Ishmael and Hagar, not God! (Gen. 21:10) God approved of the casting out (Gen. 21:12), because Ishmael was never part of His plan, *“For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise*

Part 4: Overlapping Covenants

is made of no effect" (Rom. 4:14). Second, RE advocates assume a purpose of Paul's allegory was to show Christians were given "the place and inheritance of the Jews." Again, consider the words of Max King:

"Christianity is a fulfillment of the prophecies, types and shadows of the law and not merely a 'fill-in' between Judaism and another age to come. Abraham had two sons, and there was no gap between them. They (i.e., old and new covenants, cvt) *overlapped* a little, but Isaac 'came on' when Ishmael 'went out.' The son born of the *spirit* was given the place and inheritance of the son born of the *flesh*. Hence, this simple allegory (Gal. 4:21-31) establishes the 'Spirit of Prophecy,' confirming prophecy's fulfillment in the spiritual seed of Abraham through Christ (Gal. 3:16, 26-29), and beyond the fall of Jerusalem these prophecies cannot be extended." (SOP-1, p. 239)

Thus, RE asserts Paul's allegory establishes the Jews under the old covenant were the rightful heirs of God's inheritance. However, due to their national rejection of the Messiah, they were "cast out" by God as evidenced by the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The supposed result of this great calamity was, like Ishmael, the Jews were stripped of their inheritance which was then given to Christians. Once again I do not wish to appear flippant, but there is only one thing wrong with this theory: It is wrong. The Bible teaches no such thing. Please consider the following biblical truths that prove Christians were not given "the place and inheritance of the Jews":

- ☛ This aspect of RE teaching is based on their faulty assumption Ishmael was Abraham's rightful heir "until" he was "cast out." We have already proven from the scriptures Ishmael was never the "heir" of God's "promise," because he was never part of God's plan (Gen. 16; 17:19-21). This being true, RE's attempt to draw a parallel between Isaac's supposed receipt of Ishmael's inheritance when he was "cast out" with the Jews being cast out and their "place and inheritance" being given to Christians dissolves like an early autumn fog when met by the bright early morning sunshine.
- ☛ The "inheritance" was never through the old covenant, "but God gave it to Abraham by promise" (Gal. 1:18). If the "inheritance" had been through the old covenant "it is no longer of promise" (Gal. 1:18).
- ☛ Romans 4:13-14 makes it crystal clear Christians were not "given the place and inheritance" of the Jews because "the promise...was not to Abraham or his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." It was impossible for the promise to have been through the law, "For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise of no effect."
- ☛ The "inheritance" was never through "the law" because "it is of faith that it might be according to grace" (Rom. 4:16). This was true "so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham" (Rom. 4:16). If this were not so, the "promise" to bless "all the families of the earth" (Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:8) would have been a vain and empty promise.
- ☛ Christians did not receive "the place and inheritance of the Jews" because "the righteousness of God" is "apart from the law" (Rom. 3:21). We receive "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ," because "by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified" (Rom. 3:20-21).
- ☛ Righteousness and justification were never meant to be through the old covenant, for "a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ" (Gal. 2:16). It was God's eternal plan (Eph. 3:11) that "we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified." (Gal. 2:16) Further, "if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain." (Gal. 2:21; cf. Rom. 3:20-21)
- ☛ Christians did not receive "the place and inheritance of the Jews" because the old covenant was only capable of enslaving man in "a yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:4) because the Law of Moses was never a part of the "promise." God gave the "inheritance" "by promise" not of the law (Gal. 3:15-18). The law contained no "inheritance" only a "curse," but thankfully "Christ...redeemed us from the curse of the law...that the blessing of Abraham (i.e., the "promise") might come upon" us "that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." (Gal. 3:10-13)
- ☛ Christians did not receive "the place and inheritance of the Jews" because the "promise" which brought the "inheritance" preceded the old covenant and was not dependent upon the old covenant. The "promise" was made to Abraham through Christ (Gal. 3:16) and some "four hundred and thirty years later" (Gal. 3:17) the "law...was added" (Gal. 3:19). Thus, "the law...cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect" (Gal. 3:17). Certainly "the law" was not "against the promises of God"

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(Gal. 3:21), but the law could not deliver the “promise” for it could not give “life” or “righteousness” (Gal. 3:21).

Conclusion: It is truly sad how RE advocates have taken Paul’s simple allegory (Gal. 4:21-31) twisted it and turned it completely upside down in a vain effort to support a false theory. Think about this very, very carefully: By asserting Christians received “the place and inheritance of the Jews” RE has not merely lost sight of the temporary nature of the old covenant (Gal. 3:19, 25); they have completely missed the very purpose of the law! (Gal. 3:19, 24) In doing so, whether realizing it or not, they are in essence saying it would have been possible for God’s ultimate purpose of blessing “*all the nations of the earth*” (Gen. 22:18) to have been accomplished through the old covenant. Such an assertion calls into question God’s eternal purpose to save mankind through the perfect sacrifice of Christ (Eph. 3:11). I’m sure that is a bitter pill RE advocates are unwilling to swallow, but nonetheless it is true.

Part 5: The End of the World

In the introduction we noted one of the five major errors of RE was its teaching that the end of the world took place in A.D. 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans. Recall RE also teaches that both the Old and New Covenants were in force between the cross and A.D. 70, and that in A.D. 70 at Jerusalem’s destruction the world experienced the second coming of Christ, the final judgment and the resurrection. This point needs to be crystal clear: RE teaches there will not be a day at the end of time when the Lord will return, judge the world, and destroy “*both the earth and the works that are in it*” (2 Pet. 3:10). It seems rather odd that we would have to discuss the end of the world, but as we set forth in the Introduction, this aspect of our study is necessitated by the realized eschatologist’s penchant for redefining biblical terms. Consider these quotations from RE’s chief advocate, Max King that are relevant to this issue:



“It is taken as fact by many that God will someday bring everything to a grinding halt. But this is not what the Bible says.” (SOP-2, p. 291)

“Will this earth burn with fire someday? Will it pass away with a great noise? Just what is the destiny of this material universe that God created in the beginning? The Bible actually has little to say about the destiny of the space-time universe.” (SOP-2, p. 293)

“To suggest that the fate of the temporal universe is not the topic of Scripture is not to deny the ‘end of the age’ in the end times. The world or age that ended was the Old Covenant world.” (SOP-2, p. 293)

“The world marked for destruction in prophecy, the end of which involved the second coming of Christ and resulted in the true redemption of Israel, was the Jewish world. Therefore it is the end of the Jewish world and not this material earth we live on today.” (SOP-1, 83)

Thus, RE teaches the *end of the world* “was the Old Covenant world,” in other words, the Law of Moses and Judaism, and this took place nearly 2,000 years ago at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Is this true? Did the “world” come to an end in A.D. 70?

1) Redefinition of Biblical Terms. According to RE mindset and terminology whenever one encounters the word *world* in the Bible it pretty much is universally referring to the *Jewish/Mosaic age*. Thus, when passages are discussed concerning the *end of the world* they say it is not in reference to the end of the literal, material earth. On the contrary, they maintain the reference is in regards to the end of Judaism, the Jewish age, the Old Covenant, the Law of Moses. This, of course, according to RE fancy, happened in A.D. 70 and is not some yet unfulfilled event set to transpire at the end of time. Such “tunnel vision” reminds me of the Calvinist who upon seeing the word *flesh* invariably interprets that as *man’s sinful nature*. Or, the Seventh Day Adventist who interpret *Lord’s day* as always referring to the seventh day sabbath. It would do the RE theorists well to remember that a passage should always be taken literally unless there are obvious reasons not to do so. Unfortunately such admonitions, as with all false teachers, fall on deaf ears.

2) End of the World or End of the Old Covenant and Jewish System? Let’s examine several *end of the world* passages to determine whether or not RE is truth or error.

Part 5: The End of the World

Matthew 13:24-30:

24 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; **25** but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. **26** But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. **27** So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' **28** He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' **29** But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. **30** Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn."'"

What is the meaning of this parable? Jesus provides us with the inspired explanation in verses 36-43.

Matthew 13:36-43:

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." **37** He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. **38** The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. **39** The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. **40** Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. **41** The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, **42** and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. **43** Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

The sower of "the good seed" (v. 37) is Jesus, the "field is the world" (v. 38), the "good seed" are the righteous (v. 38), and the "tares" are the unrighteous (v. 38), the "enemy that sowed the tares" is "the devil" (v. 39), "the harvest is the end of the world" (v. 39), "and the reapers are the angels" (v. 39). Verses 28-30 inform us that the Lord allows the wheat and tares to grow together until the time of "harvest" (i.e., judgment) so a complete separation can take place at that time. RE theory would have us believe this event took place in A.D. 70. But that is not possible.

The parable teaches until "the end of the world" (v. 39, KJV and ASV) the righteous and wicked are allowed to coexist with no separation until the end, or judgment. This "end of the world" sounds just like John 5:28-29 ("resurrection of life" versus "resurrection of damnation") and Matthew 25:31-46 ("sheep" versus "goats"; "life eternal" versus "everlasting punishment"). Verse 43 makes it clear the separation at "the end of the world" is a permanent and complete separation for "then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." After this point in time the godly beauty of the righteous would no longer be blighted by the presence of the "tares." Did this occur in A.D. 70 at the destruction of Jerusalem? Did the righteous and wicked cease to coexist? Do they coexist today? The answers are an obvious: No, No, Yes! If this separation occurred in A.D. 70 there would be no "tares" today. Unfortunately we live in a world dominated by the presences of "tares." Furthermore, the devil continues sowing "tares" even today, but God be thanked that the "seed of the kingdom" is also still being sown. Until the great day of "harvest" when God will "gather...all...that offend...and practice lawlessness...and cast them into the furnace of fire," (Matt. 13:41-42) we as the "children of God" must remain "blameless and harmless" and "shine as lights in the world," despite the fact we live "in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation" (Phil. 2:15).

Revelation 20:4-10:

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.

Part 5: The End of the World

RE teaching claims this passage was fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. But, the *“small and great”* did not *“stand before God”* in A.D. 70. The *“dead”* were not judged from the *“book of life”* in A.D. 70. At the *final judgment* the *“devil... was cast into the lake of fire”* (v. 10). If this be true then does the devil remain our *“adversary”* today? Does he still *“walk about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour”*? (1 Pet. 5:8) As I live my life, and look out on the world today, I can testify that, unfortunately, the devil remains alive and active; he still *“walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”* This is as true today as it was on the day Peter wrote it. However, if A.D. 70 advocates are right the *“devil...was cast into the lake of fire”* many centuries ago and no longer remains our *“adversary.”* Who can believe such gobbledygook?!

Also, in Revelation 20:11-15 several other important events transpired. First, *“the earth and the heaven fled away...and there was found no place for them”* (v. 11). In other words, the heavens, the earth and all its inhabitants vanished. If this transpired in A.D. 70 why are the *“earth and heaven”* still around? Why does the earth remain inhabited by mankind? Further, verses 12-15 describes a universal judgment. Did a judgment occur in A.D. 70? Yes, but it was a *local* judgment limited to Jerusalem, it wasn't a *universal* judgment. In this judgment all the dead stood before God (v. 12) *“and they were judged, each according to his works”* (v. 13). Was everyone judged in A.D. 70? Surely the answer is obvious to any clear-thinking person. Then, in verse 14 *“Death”* is destroyed as it is *“cast into the lake of fire.”* If this occurred in A.D. 70 then why did I have to bury my mother in July 1977 and my father in November 2001? Why do I fully expect some day to make my own one way trip to the graveyard in the back of a hearse?

The Bible clearly associates the events in Revelation 20:4-15 with the yet future second coming of Christ in judgment. This future coming will be announced by *“a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God”* (1 Thess. 4:16). This did not happen in A.D. 70. This coming is when *“the Lord Himself will descend from heaven,”* *“in like manner”* as the apostles *“saw Him go into heaven”* (Acts 1:11). This event did not transpire in A.D. 70 but is yet to come.

Hebrews 1:1-12: Please reread the quotes from RE advocate Max King in this section's introduction. He and other RE advocates obviously do not believe the physical universe as we know it will someday come to an end. Although it is hard to sometimes tell exactly what they believe because on another occasion King is reported to have said, *“I don't know what the destiny of the physical world is that we're living in.”* (*The Preterist View Heresy (II)* in *A Study of the A.D. 70 Doctrine*, p. 71). Frankly I'm not surprised because I've never found a false doctrine yet that was consistent with itself. However, let's get back to what the inspired Hebrew writer says in Hebrews 1:1-12:

1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. 5 For to which of the angels did He ever say: “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You”? And again: “I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son”? 6 But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” 7 And of the angels He says: “Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire.” 8 But to the Son He says: Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.” 10 And: “You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. 11 They will perish, but You remain; And they will all grow old like a garment; 12 Like a cloak You will fold them up, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not fail.”

In the context of this passage the Hebrew writer is emphasizing the superiority of the Christian dispensation to the Mosaic dispensation, the new covenant versus the old covenant. The inspired writer argues the Christian dispensation is superior to the Mosaic dispensation even though the Mosaic law was *“spoken through angels”* (2:2) and God *“spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets”* (v. 1). Why is the new superior to the old? Because in the new or Christian dispensation (i.e., *“these last days”* v. 2) God *“has...spoken to us by His Son”* Jesus Christ (v. 2). Thus, the Hebrew writer is going to show Jesus Christ is superior to angels that he may unequivocally establish the new covenant is superior to the old covenant.

With this task in mind, the writer draws a number of contrasts between *“the angels”* and *“the Son.”* Some of these contrasts include: A) unlike the angels, Jesus is God's *“Son”* (v. 5), B) Jesus is superior to angels because He is worshiped by the angels (v. 6), C) unlike the angels *“the Son”* is *“God”* (v. 8), and D) as God, *“the Son”* is the one who possesses *“a scepter of righteous...the scepter of Your kingdom”* (v. 8). The writer has already alluded to Christ's role in creation in verse two and then expands on this theme in verse 10 by quoting from Psalm 102:

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"You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands." (Heb. 1:10)

Is there any question the Hebrew writer and Psalmist are referring to the creation of the material universe? Not to the sound Bible student. The Hebrew writer then goes on in the next two verses to write:

"They will perish, but You remain; And they will all grow old like a garment; Like a cloak You will fold them up, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not fail." (Heb. 1:11-12)

The writer is drawing a contrast between Christ, the **Creator**, and the material universe, the **creation**. Christ the **Creator** is **eternal**, whereas the material universe, the **creation**, is **temporal**. Thus, the **creation** will pass away, but the **Creator** abides eternally. Amazingly RE advocates contend this passage is not referring to the end of the material heavens and earth, but to the end of the "Jewish age." Like the false doctrines of many groups (e.g., Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witness) every time RE advocates encounter a passage that refers to a future event, like the end of the material universe, they have to twist the passage's definition in a vain attempt to harmonize it with their pet theory.

That the passage is referring to the material "heavens and earth" is indisputable for those respecting the sacred text. Verse 11 states "they will perish." What "they" "will perish"? The things He created "in the beginning" (v. 10). What did He create "in the beginning"? He created "the earth" and "the heavens" (v. 11; cf. Gen. 1 & 2). As we leave this topic, listen to Wayne Jackson:

"Let me ask you this. In verse 10 (Heb. 1:10, cvt) the record says, 'And you, Lord, in the beginning did lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands.' Is there anybody in his right mind who is going to read this passage in the following fashion: 'And you, Lord in the beginning of the Mosaic dispensation, did lay the foundation of the earth, that is, you established the law of Moses. And you formed the heavens, that is, the ordinances of the law; these are the works of your hands'? To interpret that as the Jewish law has to be one of the most ridiculous conglomerations of theological garbage ever devised. One hates to use such strong language of condemnation, but the circumstances warrant it." (*The A.D. 70 Theory*, p. 98)

This passage in Hebrews forever puts to rest RE's false notion the end of the material heavens and earth "is not what the Bible says." On the contrary, the Bible here very plainly says "the earth...and the heavens...They will perish!"

2 Peter 3:1-13: There are many more texts we could examine in regards to RE's false theory on "the end of the world" but we must begin to draw our study to a close with 2 Peter 3:1-13. On several occasions I've defended this passage from the sophistry of materialists like Jehovah's Witnesses, but I never dreamed I would have to defend this passage from some who claim membership in the Lord's church. But these folks have twisted this passage every bit as much as the *Watchtower* followers. Once again, consider the words of Max King:

"The traditional idea of the end of the world is developed primarily from the text of 2 Peter 3:10-12, where Peter taught that the elements of the heavens would melt with fervent heat and the earth, along with its works, would be burned up. This is commonly interpreted in a literal sense, and is often quoted to support the end of the temporal universe as part of the end times. If this is the case, why is Peter the only one with this kind of arcane information about earth's last night? Are not there numerous passages of Scripture showing other ways that the world is going to be destroyed? Aren't these passages also inspired and valid in their teaching?" (SOP-1, p. 294)

I ask you to read 2 Peter 3:1-13 several times.

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.

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10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. **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, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? **13** Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Now let's briefly review the passage's main points: A) Peter is seeking to "stir up" the "minds" of the brethren by writing them again to make them "mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and...the apostles of the Lord and Savior," B) This reminder was necessitated by the claims of "scoffers" coming "in the last days" who denied the coming of the Lord in judgment and the fiery end of the world. These "scoffers" who walked "according to their own lusts" were in effect charging the people of God with preaching a lie concerning the second coming and judgment. C) However, these "scoffers" had intentionally withheld something from their own knowledge: the Flood. Peter is pointing out the Flood as a type of the destruction that was to come upon the universe by fire. The first judgment by water cleansed and purified the earth, but the second and final judgment will literally dissolve the elements of the heavens and earth. D) Peter then provides a comprehensive description of this fiery destruction. It will be so complete as to totally and completely "melt" and "dissolve" the very fundamental and elemental constituents of the heavens and earth. E) Then finally, in view of this coming destruction, the apostle admonishes and encourages the saints to live their lives in such a way as to be pleasing to the Lord so they would not suffer the "perdition of ungodly men."

RE advocates would have you believe 2 Peter 3:1-12 was entirely fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. However, here are four reasons why it is not so:

First, I submit to you that we remain "in the last days" because these "scoffers" are still with us and God is still speaking to us "by His Son." (Heb. 1:1) Turn on your television and go to the *History Channel*, *A&E*, or the *Science Channel*. You will find "scoffer" upon "scoffer" who denies and ridicules the notion of Noah's flood. These pseudo-scientists are uniformitarians who dismiss and deny the idea of geological catastrophes such as Noah's flood ("all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation," 2 Pet. 3:4). These "scoffers" will tell you it is "settled science" that the universe was not divinely created. On the contrary, life-less, unintelligent matter somehow and someway organized itself into an "infinitely small singularity" which then, due to unknown processes, exploded and expanded into the universe we know today. God is left entirely out of the picture at best and at worst the notion of divine creation is equated with the intelligence of one who believes in a flat earth. They haughtily dismiss the notion the Lord even exists, much less that He is going to return "in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1:8). According to their theories the earth will end, but it will die of natural causes billions of years hence when our sun explodes. They think those believing the earth will end when "the Lord...come[s] as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:10) are, at best, misguided luddites, or, at worst, candidates for the insane asylum. If these so-called scientists are not aptly described in 2 Peter 3 then I don't know the meaning of language.

Second, please read the passage again. Now read it using the scripture-wresting techniques of the A.D. 70 advocate:

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 A.D. 70 but not thereafter, 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 old covenant and law of Moses which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of the Jewish system.

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 Jews, not willing that any Jew should perish but that all Jews should come to repentance.

But the day of the Lord will not come as a thief in the night but with the signs Jesus foretold in Matthew 24, in which the old covenant will pass away with a great noise, and the law of Moses will melt with fervent heat?

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13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new *covenant* and a new *religious system* in which righteousness dwells.

May God forgive me for adding to and taking away from His word for the sake of illustrating this point. My editing of the text to conform to RE doctrine defies common sense doesn't it?! The passage is obviously dealing with the final judgment and the end of the material universe. This passage, by the way, agrees exactly with the Hebrew writer's view of the end of the heavens and earth (Heb. 1:10-12).

Third, it is a well-known, well-accepted and a well-advised principle of biblical interpretation that words must be taken literally unless the context demands otherwise:

"Rule 1. All words are to be understood in their literal sense, unless evident meaning of the context forbids.— Figures are the exception, literal language the rule; hence we are not to regard anything as figurative until we feel compelled to do so by the evident import of the passage. And even here great caution should be observed. We are very apt to regard contexts as teaching some theory which we have in our minds." (D. R. Dungan, Hermeneutics, p. 184)

RE apologists grant that in regards to Noah's flood terms in this passage such as "*world*," "*earth*," "*heavens*," and "*water*" are literal. However, with a wave of their eisegetical magic wand "*world*," "*earth*," "*heavens*," and "*fire*" in reference to the final dissolution of the heavens and the earth become figurative. One is accustomed to such interpretative sleight of hand from rank denominationalists, but not from those claiming membership in the Lord's church.

This twisting of the scripture by RE apologists is aptly described by brother Marc Gibson (*The A.D. 70 Doctrine Examined*, in *A Study of the A.D. 70 Doctrine*, p. 14) as "tunnel-vision." He goes on to describe it thus:

"The problem of 'tunnel-vision' is...[insisting] on only one meaning of a word used in different contexts can lead to problems. As Joe Price observed, 'The A.D. 70 doctrine would make every mention of the 'coming of the Lord' or 'day of the Lord' mean the same event, regardless of its usage in context' (Price 593). Words and phrases can have different meanings and applications depending on the context. But if one has a predetermined template of a certain doctrine or timeline, then words are already defined and subjects are already arranged according to the template, regardless of how it may violate a context. Scripture is twisted to fit the predetermined theology in whatever manner is necessary, and then presented as biblical and sound. D. R. Dungan, in his standard text on hermeneutics, warned of this danger:

'Many seem disposed to regard themselves as at liberty to make anything out of the Bible which their theology may demand or their whims require. And if, at any time, they find a passage that will not harmonize with that view, then the next thing is to find one or more words in the text used elsewhere in a figurative sense, and then demand that such be the Biblical dictionary on the meaning of that word, and hence that it must be the meaning in that place (Dungan 217).'"

RE apologists are guilty of this transgression in many places, but they reach their zenith in 2 Peter 3:1-13. They remind me of some sabbatarians I studied with several years ago. Every time those folks read the word "commandment" or "commandments" in the New Testament they insisted it meant "ten commandments." Shamefully RE apologists are the sabbatarians close kin when they meet up with "*world*," "*earth*," "*heavens*," and "*fire*" here in 2 Peter 3:1-13.

Fourth, Peter obviously uses the judgment and flood in Noah's time as a type for the final judgment and destruction of the universe at the end of time. An important principle in typology is that the *antitype*, the fulfillment, is always greater in magnitude, stature, glory, etc. than the *type*. For example, consider the Passover lamb as a type of Jesus "*The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*" (Jn. 1:29). The antitype, Christ, is greater in every aspect than the type, the Passover lamb.

In 2 Peter 3:1-13 the type is Noah's flood, the antitype is, at least according to RE theory, the destruction of Jerusalem. Does this make sense? No, Noah's flood was a **universal** event in which every creature "*in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life*" (Gen. 7:22) perished save those aboard the ark. The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 was a **local** event infinitesimally smaller by comparison which only affected the inhabitants of Jerusalem and her environs. Noah's flood "*prevailed exceedingly on the earth...and the mountains were covered*" (Gen. 7:19-20) and it killed "*all flesh...that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man.*" (Gen. 7:21) On the other hand, the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, albeit terrible and devastating, encompassed only one city and its immediate vicinity.

I also take exception to King's characterization of the information the inspired apostle provides in this passage as being

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“arcane.” The dictionary defines *arcane* as: “known or understood by very few, mysterious, secret, obscure, esoteric” (*Dictionary.com*). I’ve been a Christian for over 40 years and the only folks I know who have trouble understanding 2 Peter 3:1-13 are materialists (e.g., Jehovah’s Witnesses), premillennialists (most denominations), and those advocating the RE theory. Labeling 2 Peter 3:1-13 as *arcane* is a calculating and deceitful attempt to plant the seed of doubt in people’s minds who are not good students of the scriptures. Peter says nothing in this passage that is “mysterious,” “obscure,” or “esoteric.” The passage is straight forward and to the point. To suggest it is *arcane* is also an indictment of the Holy Spirit, especially so since His applications are very simple: 1) “*Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness*” (2 Pet. 3:11), and 2) “*Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless*” (2 Pet. 3:14). If this passage was as “mysterious” as King and his cohorts charge the disciples would have had great trouble in drawing the right conclusion and making the proper application. Balderdash!

Finally in 2 Peter 3:10, 12 Peter uses the word *elements*. RE advocates are fond of raising a quibble concerning this word. The Greek word translated *elements* in these two verses is *stoicheion*. RE advocates are correct that *stoicheion* may refer to *fundamental principles* or *primary doctrines* and such like. For example, in Hebrews 5:12 the inspired writer rebukes the Hebrew Christians that they needed to be retaught “*the first principles of the oracles of God.*” The term “*principles*” is from our Greek word *stoicheion* (cf. Gal. 4:3, 9; Col. 2:8, 20). RE advocates then assert *stoicheion* means “*principles*” in 2 Peter 3:10, 12 in an attempt to deny the passage is discussing the dissolution of the basic elements of the material universe and is referring to the “*principles*” of the old covenant, the Law of Moses, the Jewish economy.

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.”

—2 Peter 3:10

Raising such quibbles is a tried and true technique of anyone seeking to avoid the force of scriptural truth. On such matters I prefer to trust sound biblical exegesis and such trusted scholars as Vine and Thayer. Both Vine and Thayer

list the first definition of *stoicheion* as “any first thing.” They then go on to list several other definitions of *stoicheion*. The point is very simple: *stoicheion* can be “any first thing.”

In a specific passage where *stoicheion* is used what “first thing” does it refer to? To make that determination one must consider the context! That is a very common characteristic of language. The vast majority of words have multiple meanings and the meaning of a word in a particular sentence must be determined by the context. For example, the word *spirit* (Greek word *pneuma*) is used hundreds of times in the New Testament. It can refer to the Holy Spirit, the human spirit, an evil spirit, a person’s attitude, etc. However, to arrive at its specific meaning in a specific passage one must always consider the context.

The same is true with *stoicheion*. In 2 Peter 3 what is the topic of discussion? Peter is seeking to “*stir up*” the “*pure minds*” of his readers “*by way of reminder.*” He is reminding them that regardless of the boisterous denials of “*scoffers,*” “*the day of the Lord will come*” and the material universe, including “*both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*” In fact, this conflagration and destruction will be so complete “*the elements*” constituting “*the heavens*” and “*the earth*” “*will be dissolved*” because they “*will melt with fervent heat.*” The certainty of this destruction and dissolution is absolute because it is affirmed by the same word of God that destroyed the world by the flood in the days of Noah. Thus, the certainty and magnitude of this destruction should: 1) influence the Christian’s behavior (v. 11), 2) brighten the Christian’s hope (vv. 13, 14), 3) energize the Christian’s motivation (vv. 14, 18), and 4) serve as a dire warning that spiritual growth is essential to remain steadfast in the face of rampant false teaching (vv. 17, 18).

Conclusion: Once again our study has shown a stark contrast between RE doctrine and what is taught in the scriptures. Christians are to be guided by God’s word (2 Tim. 3:16-17) not the “*doctrines and commandments of men*” (Matt. 15:9). RE doctrine is not Bible doctrine, it comes from the mind of men, not the mind of God. Hence, to be deceived by the errors of RE is to be turned away to “*a different gospel*” (Gal. 1:6), an “*accursed*” gospel (Gal. 1:8-9). RE doctrine is not “*the doctrine of Christ*” (2 Jn. 9) thus those believing and teaching it are “*not abide in the doctrine of Christ*” and thus do “*not have God*” (2 Jn. 9). Harsh? The consequences of wresting the truth are set by God and not by me.

Part 6: The Resurrection



In the introduction we noted RE’s major errors included its teachings that the second coming of Christ, final judgment, end of the world, and resurrection of the dead took place in A.D. 70 with the de-

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struction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans. There are literally dozens upon dozens of other aspects of RE doctrine that are erroneous and contradictory to sound Bible teaching. To cover every one of those points would require many volumes to be written.

However, this point needs to be crystal clear: RE teaches there will NOT be a bodily resurrection of the dead at the end of time when the Lord returns to judge the world, destroy *“both the earth and the works that are in it”* (2 Pet. 3:10), present *“a crown of righteous” “on that Day” “to all who have loved His appearing”* (2 Tim. 4:8), nor will the saints be *“caught up together...in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air...and thus...always be with the Lord”* (1 Thess. 4:17). The errors of RE are egregious and legion, however, the error we will study in this section is the most grievous of all. Make no mistake, RE doctrine denies the resurrection! That being the case, the consequences of RE’s teaching on the resurrection are:

- ☛ *“Christ is not risen”* (1 Cor. 15:13, 17),
- ☛ The preaching of the apostles (and our preaching) is *“vain”* (1 Cor. 15:14),
- ☛ Our *“faith is also vain”* (1 Cor. 15:14, 17),
- ☛ The apostles were *“false witnesses of God”* (1 Cor. 15:15),
- ☛ We *“are yet in our sins”* (1 Cor. 15:17),
- ☛ Christians who have already died *“in Christ are perished”* (1 Cor. 15:18),
- ☛ Our *“hope in Christ”* is limited to *“this life only”* (1 Cor. 15:19),
- ☛ And, *“we are of all men the most miserable”* (1 Cor. 15:19).

Considering these dire ramifications our study of RE’s view of the resurrection may be the most important in this tract.

1) What Does RE Teach Concerning the Resurrection? Let us once again consider the words of RE’s champion Max King:

“...the expected eschatological resurrection was the translation of the children of God from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant (2 Cor. 3:18). The death from which we are corporately raised is from sin-death, or alienation from God. This is what it meant for Christ to be the firstfruits of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20, 23), the harvest to follow was the early church and all Israel (Jas. 1:18, cf. Revs. 14:4).” (SOP-2, p. 309)

“...is it possible that our ideas of resurrection are not at all in line with the understanding of Jesus and the Jews of his day?” (SOP-2, p. 315)

“Is it possible that biblical resurrection is about a ‘corporate’ body (singular) versus individual bodies (plural)?” (SOP-2, p. 315)

“If Israel was not the harvest (the dead) of which Christ was the firstfruits, then it makes his resurrection merely a piece of the resurrection broken off in history and separated by centuries from the resurrection of the dead. This destroys the meaning of firstfruits.” (SOP-2, p. 333)

In reference to the “dead” of 1 Cor. 15:12: “We (RE advocates, cvt) believe this class, ‘the dead, points to Old Testament Israel (under law).” (SOP-2, p. 345)

“The natural body that was sown answers to the fleshly or carnal system of Judaism in which existed prophecies, types, and patterns from which came the spiritual body designed by God. Judaism answers to the field or the world in which the good seed was sown (Matt. 13:37-38) this natural body receiving its death blow at the cross and beginning to wax old and decay (Heb. 8:13) became a nursery or seed body for the germination, growth and development of the spiritual body by means of the gospel. Thus, out of the decay of Judaism arose the spiritual body of Christianity that became fully developed or resurrected by the end time (i.e., A.D. 70, cvt). Hence, this is the primary meaning of Paul’s statement ‘it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body; there is a natural body, then there is a spiritual body.’” (SOP-1, p. 200)

“The fall of Jerusalem was the time of death’s destruction. Death and Hades were both cast into the Lake of Fire. Death, biblically speaking, is alienation from God, and the destruction of death is the end of that alienation...” (SOP-2, p. 289)

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"The church was in the grave or casket of Judaism until the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem." (from the debate between Max King and Gus Nichols, 1973.)

"I deny that John 5:28 is a literal grave in the cemetery somewhere." (from the debate between Max King and Gus Nichols, 1973.)

I realize those quotations are a very deep swamp to wade through. However, I want to be sure we adequately document just how outlandish and preposterous the claims of RE doctrine are. There are so many errors of RE concerning the resurrection it is difficult to wrap your mind around them all. Wayne Jackson wrote a book, *The A.D. 70 Theory*, which does a wonderful job of defining RE's position on the resurrection:

"Here is the Max King view of the resurrection. The church came into existence on the day of Pentecost, Acts chapter 2, in the year A.D. 30. It is alleged that certain portions of the law of Moses were nailed to the cross that very year, but that the Mosaic system, in a sense, also continued in force until A.D. 70, so that, in reality, there were **two** systems operating at the same time—the Mosaic system and the Christian system.

Here was the situation, as they allege it. The Mosaic regime was hovering over, smothering, dominating, intimidating, and persecuting the Christian system, so that the kingdom, the church (in its power and glory) was not yet fully operative. However, in A.D. 70, when the Jewish nation was destroyed by the Romans, the church, or 'the body' was, in a manner of speaking, resurrected. It had, in effect, been 'buried' under Judaism for forty years, from A.D. 30 to 70. When the Jewish nation fell, though, in A.D. 70, there was at that time, effectually speaking, a resurrection of Christianity. It was a raising of the body of Christ, from that old suppressive, Judaistic system. So, according to the theology of Max King and his followers, when the Bible speaks of the resurrection of the body, it is not discussing the **human** body; rather, it is alluding to the resurrection of the church out of stifling Judaism." (pp. 59-60)

The most important fact to keep in mind is this:

RE doctrine denies that the "resurrection of the dead" mentioned prominently in the Bible (e.g., Jn. 5:28-29; Matt. 22:23-33; Mk. 12:18-27; Lk. 20:27-40; Acts 23:6; 24:15; 1 Cor. 15; Phil. 3:10-11; etc.) is a literal resurrection of dead human beings.

Every aspect of RE teaching is contradictory with the truth of scripture. Also, every aspect of RE is inconsistent with itself. Consider that RE variously defines the resurrection as:

- ☛ The "translation of the children of God from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant."
- ☛ The "harvest (i.e., resurrection to follow Christ's resurrection, cvt) was the early church and all Israel."
- ☛ The resurrection is of a "'corporate' body (singular)" not "individual bodies (plural)".
- ☛ "Christ was the firstfruits" of the resurrection, but Israel was "the harvest" of the resurrection.
- ☛ Israel ("carnal system of Judaism") was "the natural body that was sown" and the "spiritual body" that was raised is "Christianity," and this resurrection took place in A.D. 70.
- ☛ The "church" was raised from the dead because it "was in the grave or casket of Judaism."

All aspects of RE doctrine exhibit this lack of internal consistency, but lack of consistency finds its pinnacle in RE's teaching on the resurrection. This lack of internal consistency is an important distinguishing characteristic of all false teaching.

2) **The Resurrection of the Dead and the New Testament:** Does the New Testament teach RE's version of the resurrection or does it teach a literal resurrection of dead human beings? Let's consider several important "resurrection" passages:

- ☛ **Matthew 22:23-33** (cf. Mk. 12:18-27; Lk. 20:27-40): Here is the text:

23 The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, **24** saying: "Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. **25** Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. **26** Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. **27** Last of all the woman died also. **28** Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her."

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29 Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. **30** For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. **31** But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, **32** 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." **33** And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching.

First, read this passage and ask yourself if either Jesus or the Sadducees believed the resurrection was a "bodily resurrection of people" or "the resurrection of the church, Israel, the children of God from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant," or the resurrection of "the Christian system from the oppression of Judaism," etc. The passage, and its parallels in Mark and Luke, make it unequivocally clear the resurrection refers to the resurrection of "people," not causes, institutions, covenants or corporate bodies.

When one speaks of a resurrection it must be kept clearly in mind: Every resurrection requires a death; whatever is resurrected was that which died. It is true the resurrected form may be different than the form that died, but everything resurrected must first die. So what died in this passage? Was it the church? Was it Israel? Was it the Old Covenant? No! People died. The woman and all seven of her husbands died, therefore, they are what was resurrected. To replace the people in this passage with the church, Israel, or the Old Covenant is one of the best (or worst!) demonstrations of 2 Peter 3:16 I've ever seen.

As one reads this passage and its parallels (Mk. 12:18-27; Lk. 20:27-40) it is manifestly evident they are undoubtedly referring to the resurrection of dead people. This is crystal clear and unequivocal. The Sadducees discuss the death of eight people in verses 24-27: all of the "brothers" "even to the seventh" "died" and "then last of all the woman died also." The Sadducees then clearly say in verse 28, "in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be?" I don't mean to beat a dead horse, but who is the "wife" and who are "the seven"? They are the *people* who died in verses 24-27. There is no language whatsoever to suggest these people represent the church, Israel, or the Old Covenant. Furthermore, in verse 30 Jesus says, "in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage." Who are the "they" that "neither marry nor are given in marriage" "in the resurrection"? Are the "they" **people** or the church? Are the "they" **people** or the nation of Israel? Are the "they" **people** or the Old Covenant? To suggest "they" are not the woman and her seven husbands is to grossly "wrest...the Scriptures" at worst, or at best, one of the most shocking misunderstandings of the Bible I've ever seen.

In his book *The A.D. 70 Theory: A Review of the Max King Doctrine* Wayne Jackson makes a very important observation concerning these passages (Matt. 22:23-33; Mk. 12:18-27; Lk. 20:27-40) and the resurrection. He points out that there are only three possible views that can be considered concerning the resurrection: 1) The resurrection refers to the resurrection of the **human body**, or 2) The resurrection is that of the **human soul**, or 3) There is **no resurrection** at all. Only one view can be true.

If it is the resurrection of the human soul then, like the Jehovah's Witnesses assert, RE advocates must contend that the soul dies, because we've already immutably established the fact that whatever is resurrected must first die. Any good Bible student knows the death of the soul in this fashion is never taught in scripture (e.g., Matt. 10:28). If one argues there is no resurrection he is put under the condemnation of the Lord, as were the Sadducees: "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God" (v. 29). In reality this is the position taken by RE adherents. Thus, by the process of elimination it is clear the Sadducees and Jesus are both talking about the resurrection of the human body.

The Sadducees obviously thought Jesus believed in a bodily resurrection which they arrogantly totally repudiated, that's why they asked him the question: "In the resurrection therefore whose wife will she be of the seven?" (v. 27) They thought they had painted Jesus into a philosophical corner. Think about it. If there was **no resurrection** Jesus would have surely agreed with the Sadducees. Or, if the resurrection were not of the human body, but referred to causes, institutions, covenants or corporate bodies He would have corrected them and told them so. Jesus does neither. On the contrary, Jesus affirms there is a bodily resurrection of dead people and supports His argument with two facts: 1) "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage" (v.30). Who are the "they" that "neither marry nor are given in marriage" "in the resurrection"? They are the "they" that died in verses 24-27, which were the "seven brothers" and "the woman." And, 2) His statement that God says: "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." (vv. 31-32) In other words, even though the Patriarchs are physically dead, in reality they are alive, and they live in anticipation of being reunited with their physical bodies. In fact, the incident of Abraham's offering of Isaac foreshadowed the bodily resurrection (cf. Gen. 22:6-14; Heb. 11:17-19). Consider a quote from Wayne Jackson on the passage:

"The fact is, that (i.e., bodily resurrection, cvt) is the only kind of resurrection there can be (in this passage, cvt). There cannot be a resurrection of the soul, because the soul does not die. It is absurd to suggest that the Lord was speaking of a resurrection of the **church** in this context. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were not members

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of the church! The Savior was talking about the resurrection of the physical body, that is, the body that is now physical, but will exist in a **non-physical** form at the time of the resurrection (see 1 Cor. 15).” (*The A.D. 70 Theory: A Review of the Max King Doctrine*, p. 65)

The controversy between Jesus and the Sadducees raises a rather prickly problem for RE advocates. We have already established beyond a shadow of doubt Matthew 22:23-33 (Mk. 12:18-27; Lk. 20:27-40) is talking about the bodily resurrection of real human beings. Notice that in the course of answering the Sadducees Jesus tells 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.”* (Lk. 20:34-37)

Who are the “who” of verse 35? They are “those who are counted worthy to attain...the resurrection from the dead.” In other words, Jesus is referring to the human beings who have been resurrected. RE advocates claim the resurrection occurred in A.D. 70. If that is true why are people still marrying today? Why are people still dying today? If RE doctrine is correct Jesus is saying neither marriage nor death exist in the current age. Either Jesus or RE doctrine is wrong? Which one do you pick as being in error?

☛ **John 5:28-29:** Here is the text:

28 Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice **29** and come forth — those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

First, who is the subject of this resurrection? It is “all who are in the graves” (v. 28). Who is “in the graves”? Is it the church? Is it Israel? Is it the children of God from the Old Covenant being transitioned to the New Covenant? Is it the Christian system under the oppression of Judaism? Let’s try a novel idea and let the Bible tell us. In the context of John 5:28-29 Jesus is obviously talking about individual human beings. For example, in verse 24 Jesus says “he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me.” This “he” is obviously a person, a human being. The “he” is not the church, Israel, the children of God from the Old Covenant being transitioned to the New Covenant, nor the Christian system under the oppression of Judaism. The “he” is a real flesh and blood person and thus those being resurrected in verses 28 and 29 are real flesh and blood people.



All flesh and blood persons are destined to die (Heb. 9:27). But, Jesus tells us a “the hour is coming” when these people (who we’ve already seen from Jesus’s comments on Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob exist in some state of consciousness after physical death, cf. Lk. 16:19-31) “will hear His voice and come forth (i.e., be resurrected, vv. 28-29). Who is going to “come forth”? It will be “all who” (v. 28). The word “all” is an adjective describing the scope of “who.” The word “who” is a pronoun identifying a class of people, the class of people are those “in the graves.” So the scope of the resurrection includes E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E “in the graves.” This is exactly in agreement with Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 15:22: “For in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.”

Those “in the graves” are of the same class as those capable of hearing His “word” in verse 24: **people**. Those “in the graves” are not the church, Israel, the children of God from the Old Covenant being transitioned to the New Covenant, or the Christian system under the oppression of Judaism. Think very carefully: if it were the church as a ‘corporate’ body “in the graves” as King and his cohorts contend, then the church had to have died. Now try to square that with “and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” of Matthew 16:18 or the numerous passages in the book of Acts that speak of the phenomenal growth of the church during the A.D. 30-70 time frame (Acts 5:14; 6:1, 7; 9:31; 11:21; 14:21; 16:5). Once again, RE doctrine just doesn’t measure up.

Furthermore, in John 5:28-29 two classes of people are going to be resurrected: 1) “those that have done good, to the resurrection of life,” and 2) “those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.” This presents another huge problem for RE advocates. If Jesus is discussing the resurrection of the first century church there had to have been two churches! A “bad” church, and a “good” church, both resurrected from the dominating and oppressive influence of Judaism. That is pure nonsense!

Also, Jesus’s description of two classes of people being resurrected (“those who have done good” and “those that have done evil”) is exactly what Paul says in Acts 24:15 when he says, “...there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.” And, “the resurrection of life” and “resurrection of condemnation” are exactly parallel to the fate of the people of “all

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nations” in Matthew 25:31-46 who are judged and go “into everlasting punishment” or “into eternal life.” The subject of all of these judgment and resurrection passages are individual people, not causes, institutions, covenants or corporate bodies.

☛ **John 6:40:** Here is another very problematic text for RE advocates:

And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

Who is it that Jesus “will raise...up at the last day”? The New King James and every major translation (KJV, NASV, ASV and NIV) identifies it as an individual person: “him.” The entire context of John 6:40 clearly shows Jesus is discussing individual people; not causes, institutions, covenants or corporate bodies. It is the individual person Jesus encourages to eat “His flesh” (v. 53) or, as He also describes Himself, the “bread from heaven” (v. 32), “the bread of God...who gives life” (v. 33), “the bread of life” (v. 35), etc. To whom does Jesus give this life? To any individual who “comes to” Jesus (v.35) and “believes in Him” (v. 40). These are the persons Jesus promises to “raise up at the last day” (vv. 40, 54).

How much plainer can it be that Jesus is talking about the resurrection of people and not causes, institutions, covenants or corporate bodies?! A literal resurrection of the dead (people) “at the last day” was exactly the understanding of Jesus’ disciples all along. For example, remember when Jesus told Martha concerning her dead brother Lazarus: “Your brother will rise again.” (Jn. 11:23). Recall that Martha responded, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” (Jn. 11:24) She understood the resurrection spoke of the resurrection of real flesh and blood people. If the resurrection was of causes, institutions, covenants or corporate bodies; why did Jesus not use these occasions to clarify His teaching?

One more important point from John 6:40 (cf. Jn. 11:35) is that Jesus says the resurrection will occur on the “last day.” How many days have transpired since A.D. 70? Even if we grant the resurrection spoken of here is not the bodily resurrection of people, RE advocates are left holding an empty sack. On this point RE advocates use a “King-size” twisting of scriptures saying the “last day” refers to the “last day” of the Old Covenant or Judaism. However, there is nothing whatsoever in the context to provide even one iota of support to that supposition. It is merely another case of twisting the scripture in a vain attempt to dodge biblical truth.

☛ **Acts 17:22-32:** Here Paul speaks to the Greek philosophers in Athens:

22 Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; **23** for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: **24** God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. **25** Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. **26** And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, **27** so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; **28** for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' **29** Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. **30** Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, **31** because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, “We will hear you again on this matter.”

At the end of his short sermon Paul mentions the “resurrection of the dead” (v. 32). Who are “the dead” to which he refers? Remember, he is in Athens and is not speaking to Jews. He is speaking to Gentiles hundreds of miles removed from Jerusalem and Israel. Is a lesson on the destruction of Jerusalem relevant in these circumstances? No! If, as RE advocates claim, the resurrection is that of the church, Israel, children of God from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant, or the Christian system from the oppression of Judaism; the Athenians would not have had the first clue of what Paul was talking about.

The word Paul uses for “dead” in “the resurrection of the dead” (v. 32) is the Greek word *nekron*, which is a plural noun literally meaning the “dead ones.” Paul is teaching the same general resurrection Jesus taught “in which all who are in the graves

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will hear His voice and come forth" (Jn. 5:28-29). This is not some mysterious esoteric resurrection of a cause, but the resurrection of *people*, those that have died and gone to the grave—all the "dead ones."

Even more conclusive are Paul's words in verses 30-31. Who does he warn "to repent" (v. 30)? Who will God "judge" on the "appointed day" (v. 31)? The answer is quite simple it will be "all men everywhere" (v. 31). These are the same folks referred to in John 5:28-29 and John 6:40: all the "dead ones." Furthermore, as evidence of this coming universal judgment, God has "given assurance." Just what "assurance" has He given? God "raised Him (Christ) from the dead" (v. 31). How did God raise "Him from the dead"? Check out the gospel accounts and the first chapter of Acts. God raised Christ's literal body from the dead. It is well documented that many ancient cultures, especially the Greeks, held the thought of a physical, bodily resurrection in the highest contempt. That is why they ridicule it in verse 32. If Paul had been speaking of a figurative resurrection of a cause, etc. they would not have been so dismissive.

Last, what parallel is there between a literal and bodily resurrection of a person (Jesus) and that of a figurative, spiritual resurrection of an inanimate concept? Little if any! The suggestion that Christ's resurrection was of one kind (literal, bodily) and "the resurrection of the dead" is of entirely different kind (figurative, spiritual) only makes sense if one is trying to "wrest the scriptures" to fit a human-devised theory.

☛ **Acts 23:6-8:** Here Paul is defending himself before the council:

6 But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!"

7 And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. 8 For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection — and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both.

Remember RE advocates contend the resurrection is not a bodily resurrection of people, but of the church, Israel, children of God from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant, or the Christian system from the oppression of Judaism. In this passage Paul drives a wedge between the two camps opposing him by taking advantage of their disagreement over the resurrection. The Pharisees agreed with Paul "concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead" (v. 6) because they "confess" the resurrection. On the other hand, the Sadducees "say that there is no resurrection" (v. 8).

If RE advocates are correct in their definition of the resurrection Paul's strategy would have been a gigantic failure! Would the Pharisees have supported a resurrection of the church? No! Would they have supported a resurrection of Israel? No, they were very satisfied with the status quo. Would they have supported a resurrection of the children of God from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant? Absolutely not! Would they have supported a resurrection of the Christian system from the oppression of Judaism? No, because they were the oppressors! The only resurrection in which the Pharisees would unite with Paul in opposition to the Sadducees was the resurrection Jesus described in Matthew 22:23-33, which was the literal resurrection of dead people.

☛ **1 Corinthians 15:** This passage contains the most extensive discussion of the resurrection in the entire Bible. Due to the length of the passage I ask you to read it. In fact, I would encourage you to read it several times.

In my opinion 1 Corinthians 15 is one of the most beautiful and encouraging passages in the entire Bible. I also believe, and will prove, it is a very clear and easy passage to understand. However, as is their usual mode of operation, RE advocates twist this passage into oblivion and make its teaching bear no resemblance to reality. In fact, in his book *The Cross and the Parousia of Christ*, Max King devotes 219 pages to a discussion of 1 Corinthians 15. As one brother noted: "Apparently it takes many pages to develop an erroneous interpretation that violates the text and context of one chapter of divine scripture." (*The A.D. 70 Doctrine Examined in A Study of the A.D. 70 Doctrine*, p. 21)

As we study 1 Corinthians 15 keep in mind that according to RE doctrine the *resurrection* is never to be taken as a literal, bodily resurrection of human beings except in the case of Jesus. On the contrary, they teach the physical body is discarded forever upon death and each individual upon dying immediately receives a spiritual body and goes to heaven. Most RE advocates such as Max King would term this as a "secondary application" of 1 Corinthians 15. Their "primary application" is that the resurrection "is a spiritual process of dying to the old Judaism and rising to the kingdom of God, with this entire process beginning with Christ's resurrection and culminating at A.D. 70." (*The A.D. 70 Doctrine Examined in A Study of the A.D. 70 Doctrine*, p. 12)

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In summary, RE teaches: A) There is not a literal, bodily resurrection of either the righteous or wicked dead, and B) All biblical teaching about the resurrection was fulfilled in A.D. 70. Let us consider five arguments from 1 Corinthians 15 that proves RE doctrine is false and supports the biblical doctrine of a literal, bodily resurrection of the dead on the day of judgment.

Argument #1: Paul's primary purpose in 1 Corinthians 15 was to address the error some were teaching in Corinth that *"there is no resurrection of the dead"* (v. 12). These folks were not denying the literal, bodily resurrection of Jesus. No, they were claiming there was no *general resurrection* of the dead. Very importantly, in principle, they were teaching the *exact same error* as RE advocates teach today.

Please notice how Paul answers these false teachers: *"But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen."* (v. 13) That is, if there is no *general resurrection* of the dead then *"Christ is not risen."* In fact, Paul states this truism twice, for in verse 15 he says, *"if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen."* Now think about this very carefully: If the existence of the *general resurrection* of the dead is necessary to prove the *resurrection of Christ* from the dead, then the converse must be true that the *resurrection of Christ* from the dead proves the existence of a *general resurrection* of the dead. The two go hand in hand, if one exists, both exist. If one does not exist, then neither exists. If one falls, both fall; if one stands, both stand.

Now, how did Christ die? He suffered a literal, bodily death (Matt. 27:50; Mk. 15:37; Lk. 23:46; Jn. 19:30). How did Christ arise? He arose literally and bodily (see vv. 4-8). If there is to be any parallel between the resurrection of Christ *"from the dead"* and the general *"resurrection from the dead,"* both resurrections must be of the same type. Both involve a literal, bodily death and both involve a literal, bodily resurrection.

Argument #2: It is also important to consider the meaning of the word *resurrection*. The word *resurrection* comes from the Greek word *anastasis*, which means "to cause to stand" (Vine). Thus, whatever part of man "lies down" when he dies, will be made to "stand up" when he is resurrected. What part of Jesus "lay down" when he died? Was it his soul? No, His soul went to the hades realm (Lk. 23:43; Acts 2:27). It was His body that was "laid down" in the tomb (Matt. 27:58-60; Mk. 15:45-47; Lk. 23:52-55; Jn. 19:38-42). What part of Jesus was made to "stand up" when He was resurrected? Was it his soul? No, it was His body (Lk. 24:3, 23). As Paul says, *"He was buried, and...He rose again the third day"* (1 Cor. 15:4). It happened exactly as the Lord had predicted, *"The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up."* (Matt. 17:22-23)

Now our point: for a resurrection to take place a death must have taken place. Further, whatever *died*, or was *laid down*, is that which is *resurrected*, or made to *stand*. Jesus *died* and His *"body was laid"* (Lk. 23:55) *"in...a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid"* (Jn. 19:40). Then in His *resurrection* the same body was *"raised up"* (Acts 2:24). Now, in 1 Corinthians 15:18 what was *laid down* when *"those...in Christ"* had *"fallen asleep"* (i.e. died)? Just like Jesus it was their *body* that was *laid down* into the grave. It was not their soul, a cause, an institution, a covenant, or a corporate body. And, Paul says these same people at some point after Christ's resurrection will also be resurrected (1 Cor. 15:23).

Now, what part of these folks will be resurrected? Just like Christ it will be the same part of them that was *laid* in the grave: their body. In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul makes it clear that this mortal body is *"changed"* (v. 51) into a body that is completely suited for eternal life (vv. 35-49). And, even though we don't know the exact composition of this resurrected body, we do know it will *"bear the image of the heavenly Man"* Jesus (v. 49, cf. Phil. 3:21; 1 Jn. 3:3). The assertion of RE advocates that the resurrection of 1 Corinthians 15 is not the bodily resurrection is ludicrous, ridiculous and would be downright laughable if it were not so serious.

Argument #3: Paul tells us *"Christ is risen from the dead"* (v. 20). Christ's bodily resurrection was an accepted fact even by the false teachers in Corinth (It is also accepted by RE advocates.). The very fact these Corinthian false teachers believed in the bodily resurrection of Jesus proved their teaching *"that there is no resurrection of the dead"* (v. 12) was dead wrong (no pun intended!). Recall from Argument #1 that the *resurrection of Christ* and the *general resurrection* are a package deal. If either one is true, both are true.

Furthermore, Paul states that through His resurrection *"Christ...has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep"* (v. 20). The term *"firstfruits"* is from the old covenant concept where the Israelites would offer the first part of a crop's harvest to the Lord as a sacrifice. This was done in recognition that all the produce of the land was a gift from the Lord. And, it was given in prospect that the rest of the entire crop would be harvested. Very importantly, the *"firstfruit"* offered was of the same crop as the anticipated harvest. If the crop was the wheat crop, then the first portion of that wheat crop was offered as the *"firstfruits,"* not barley or figs. The offering and the subsequent crop were identical in *kind*.

The very same thing is true in the resurrection. Christ's death was literal and bodily; His resurrection was literal and bodily.

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Thus, the general resurrection, of which *“Christ...has become the firstfruits”* involves *“those who have fallen asleep”* (v. 20). In other words, it involves those persons who, like Christ, have literally and bodily died. Hence, if the *“firstfruits”* principle is to hold, these folks, just like Christ, are going to be literally and bodily resurrected. The *“firstfruits”* established the *pattern* for the harvest to follow, just as Jesus established the *pattern* for the general resurrection to follow! This is in exact agreement with argument #1 where it was shown, unequivocally, that the resurrection of Christ and the general resurrection go hand in hand. If one exists, both exist. If one does not exist, then neither exists. They stand or fall together, there is no middle ground, no other choice.

Argument #4: Paul goes on to identify the subjects of the general resurrection as *“those who are Christ’s at His coming”* (v. 23). Who are *“those who are Christ’s at His coming”*? Are they individual people? Or, are they a cause, an institution, a covenant or a corporate body? They are people; the people who obeyed the gospel of Christ (vv. 1-2) but have died, or as Paul puts it *“those who have fallen asleep in Christ”* (v. 18).

Paul goes on to say that if *“Christ is not risen, your faith is futile, you are still in your sins”* and thus *“those that have fallen asleep in Christ have perished”* (vv. 17-18). Notice what such a situation would create: *“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.”* (v. 19) Who are *“the most pitiable”*? Paul identifies them as *“men.”* What *“men”*? It is those *“men”* who *“in this life”* had a hope of the resurrection of their own literal bodies based on their knowledge of Christ’s literal, bodily resurrection and their obedience to His gospel. Paul’s entire discussion is of a literal, bodily resurrection, Christ as the *“firstfruits,”* followed by those who had put their faith in Christ. The RE notion of the resurrection of causes, institutions, covenants, or corporate bodies is a concept totally foreign to this passage!

Argument #5: Paul says, *“For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.”* (v. 21) The first clause is a reference to physical death that came upon all mankind through the fall of Adam (Gen. 3:19; Heb. 9:27). The second clause is telling us that, just as all men die, all men, whether righteous or wicked, will ultimately be raised from the dead. Jesus said this very thing in John 5:28-29:

28 Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice 29 and come forth — those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

It makes no sense for Paul, within the space of one sentence, to switch gears from talking of man’s death to the subject of the resurrection of causes, institutions, covenants, or corporate bodies. Remember: whatever is resurrected is that which dies. Death in this passage is in reference to the death of individual human beings, hence, the resurrection is in reference to those same human beings. I actually feel foolish having to explain such a simple concept. A concept even my pre-teen daughter understands without having to explain it to her.

There are many more arguments that could be made from this beautiful passage. However, if one is not convinced by now that this passage is discussing the resurrection of individual Christians, they will not be convinced by a thousand more.

However, before leaving 1 Corinthians 15 I want to address two more topics. First, when does Paul say the *“resurrection of the dead”* will occur? RE advocates would have us believe the resurrection happened no later than A.D.70. But Paul says it will take place *“at His coming”* (v. 23). Which *“coming”*? The *“coming”* when Christ *“delivers the kingdom to God the Father”* (v. 24). Why this *“coming”*? *“For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.”* (vv. 25, 26) So, when will Christ destroy death? It will be when *“the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible...when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’”* (vv. 52-54) In other words, it is when all *“those who have fallen asleep in Christ”* are *“made alive.”* Did this happen in A.D. 70? No! Is it yet to happen? Yes! When? It will happen *“...at the last day”* (Jn. 6:40) when *“all who are in the graves and hear His voice and come forth — those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”* (Jn. 5:28-29)

I don’t know about you, but I share Paul’s intense desire to *“attain to the resurrection of the dead”* (Phil. 3:11). I can’t tell you when that day is coming for it will come without warning *“as a thief in the night”* (1 Thess. 5:2). But I do know *“that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 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. 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.”* (1 Thess. 4:15-18) This exactly agrees with what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:51-52: *“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”*

Part 6: The Resurrection

Finally, it should be borne in mind RE adherents are not unanimous or consistent in their beliefs and teachings. From my studies this appears to apply, in some degree, to every aspect of RE doctrine. However, this is particularly true when it comes to the resurrection. Concerning the resurrection, the beliefs I've ran across, in addition to those I've already discussed, include: 1) belief that the physical body of either the righteous or wicked dead are not resurrected and "*changed*" (1 Cor. 15:51) into a "*glorious*" (Phil. 3:21) and "*incorruptible*" (1 Cor. 15:52) body, but only the spirit of man goes to his eternal reward, 2) belief that each person is resurrected immediately upon death and goes to their reward; that is, there is not a general resurrection at "*the last day*" (Jn. 6:39-40) when "*all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth*" (Jn. 5:28-29), and 3) belief the dead were resurrected in A.D. 70 and went to their reward, however, subsequent to A.D. 70 each person is resurrected immediately upon death and then goes to their reward as either a spirit or as a spirit in a "*changed*" body. There are also some RE adherents that believe/teach combinations and permutations of these three views.

Two common threads run through these false RE views of the resurrection: 1) the WHEN of the resurrection, 2) the WHO or the resurrection, and 3) the WHAT of the resurrection. Before reading on please read and review the following passages of scripture: Matt. 10:28; 25:31-46; Mk. 9:43-48; Lk. 16:19-31; Jn. 5:28-29; 6:39-40, 44, 54; 11:24; 12:48; Acts 17:15; 24:15; Rom. 2:16; 8:11; 1 Cor. 1:7; 6:14; 15:20-28, 51-54; Phil. 1:10; 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 1:10; 4:13-18; 2 Tim. 4:8; Titus 4:8; Heb. 9:27-28; 1 Pet. 1:5; 2 Pet. 3:1-13; 1 Jn. 3:2; Rev. 20:11-15. Did you read them?! If you are a serious student of the Bible and truly seeking to understand the resurrection it is imperative to read them. Please imitate the noble-minded Bereans and search the scriptures so you can decide whether what I'm saying is "*so*" (Acts 17:11).

Briefly, these passages teach that all men, both righteous and wicked (WHO) will have their physical, mortal bodies resurrected and changed into an incorruptible, spiritual body (WHAT) at the end of time when Christ returns to judge all men, destroy the material universe, and reward all men according to their works (WHEN). Although these three subjects have obvious points of overlap, let's consider each one separately.

WHEN

I submit the scriptures teach the resurrection of the dead has not taken place as of yet. So far in God's scheme of redemption only one person has been resurrected to eternal life: Jesus Christ. Paul said the resurrection of Christ served as "*the firstfruits*" (1 Cor. 15:23) of the general resurrection of the dead which will occur "*afterward*" (1 Cor. 15:23). Hence, at the present time mankind is in a period of waiting (cf. 1 Cor. 1:7; Phil. 1:10; 1 Thess. 1:10; 2 Tim. 4:8; Titus 2:13) for the resurrection and judgment despite many "*scoffers*" who arrogantly and boastfully are "*saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming?'*" (2 Pet. 3:4). They are willfully ignorant that God has not forgotten His promise, but in truth is graciously exercising His "*longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance*" (2 Pet. 3:9).

Jesus referred to this time "*afterward*" as an "*hour*" that "*is coming*" (Jn. 5:28) and as "*the last day*" (Jn. 6:39-40, 44, 54; cf. Jn. 11:24). This "*last day*" is also the day on which Jesus will "*judge the world in righteousness*" (Jn. 12:48) or as Paul described it as "*the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel*" (Rom. 2:6). And in another place (Acts 17:15) Paul describes it this way: "*He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.*"

In 1 Corinthians 15 we find this "*last day*" will be heralded by "*the last trumpet*" (v. 52). This trumpet signals the "*moment*" in which "*all*" (those dead and those alive at Christ's coming) will be "*changed*" or "*transformed*" so that "*our lowly body...may be conformed to His glorious body*" (Phil. 3:21). Or, as Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians 15 "*the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*" (vv. 52-53) In 1 Thessalonians 4:16 Paul refers to this trumpet as "*the trumpet of God*" which will call forth "*the dead in Christ*" and will herald that "*we who are alive and remain*" will be "*caught up together with them* (i.e., dead in Christ who have been raised) *in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*" (1 Thess. 4:17)

Very importantly, in 1 Corinthians 15 the sounding of "*the last trumpet*" (v. 52) also signals the change of "*all*" (both the dead and the living, v. 51) into resurrected bodies. Then, in turn, the resurrection signals Jesus' final victory over death. Hear the apostle:

52 For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. **53** For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. **54** So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "*Death is swallowed up in victory.*"

Christ's victory over death via the resurrection of "*all*" signals the end of Christ's reign (vv. 25-26): "*For He must reign*

Part 6: The Resurrection

till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death."

In his first epistle John tells us when *"we shall be like Him"* *"has not yet been revealed"* (1 Jn. 3:2). So *"when"* *"shall"* *"we...be like Him"*? This will happen *"when He (Jesus) is revealed,"* or as some translations read, *"when He appears,"* in other words, when He comes the second and final time in judgment! And that will not occur until the *"appointed day"* (Acts 17:15) which Jesus said is *"the last day"* (Jn. 12:48).

In the Revelation John pictures the great final judgment scene on that *"last day"* in 20:11-15. All the dead, both *"small and great"* (v. 11), those of *"all nations"* (Matt. 25:31), both righteous and wicked (Matt. 25:33) are present. Notice that *"Death and Hades,"* that is the grave (the realm of dead, *"corruptible"* bodies) and *"Hades"* (the realm of disembodied spirits, Lk. 16:19-31) gave up their contents...all of their contents! They did not dribble out their contents as each individual human died over the progress of time. On the contrary, they gave them all up in one final judgment as *"Death and Hades"* are brought to their end and *"were cast into the lake of fire."* (v. 14) *"Death and Hades"* received their doom because the *"end"* had come (1 Cor. 15:24) as Christ achieves victory over *"the last enemy...death"* at the resurrection of *"all"* the dead (1 Cor. 15:51-54). Once again we see the wonderful and fantastic harmony of the scriptures.

Thus, the Bible could not be clearer: the resurrection of the dead will not take place till *"afterward,"* in that *"hour"* on *"the last day...appointed day"* as *"the last trumpet...the trumpet of God"* sounds, *"when He appears,"* *"to judge the world in righteousness,"* *"by the Man whom He has ordained"* when *"the hour"* comes *"in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation,"* and *"the last enemy will be destroyed...death,"* *"then comes the end"* when Jesus ends His reign.

WHAT

I submit the scriptures teach that at the resurrection all men, both righteous and wicked, will have their *"mortal,"* *"corruptible"* bodies *"changed"* to *"immortal,"* *"incorruptible"* bodies suited for eternal life, whether that life is in heaven or in hell.

In 1 Corinthians 15:20-28, 51-54 Paul makes it clear whether one is *"asleep"* (i.e., dead, vv. 20, 51) or *"not"* in *"sleep"* (v. 51) *"we shall all be changed"* (v. 51). This change will occur *"at the last trumpet"* which coincides with the final judgment (Matt. 25:31-46; Jn. 12:48; Acts 17:15; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 20:11-15). This change will consist of *"this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal (i.e., decaying body, Rom. 8:11) must put on immortality"* (v. 53) and will herald Christ's final victory, His victory over death (vv. 24-26, 54). If you object to this change in our *"mortal"* body then please read 1 Cor. 15:35-51 where Paul discusses the nature of the resurrected body. In a nutshell Paul tells us we will be fitted with a body entirely suited for eternal life whether it is in heaven or in hell.

If one would give it some thought it should be clear that all men, whether righteous or wicked, will need a *"changed"* body before entering heaven or hell. For example, consider Jesus' words in Matthew 10:28:

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

In this passage Jesus makes it clear that those in *"hell"* (*gehenna*) will have both a *"soul"* and a *"body."* In Mark 9:43-48 Jesus also makes it clear that in *"hell"* (*gehenna*) that *"body"* will be subject to *"the fire that shall not be quenched."* In other words, the *"body"* one has in *"hell"* will burn but never be consumed. It should be obvious He is not referring to this *"mortal"* body because we are all aware of the effects of fire on our *"mortal,"* *"corruptible"* body. Hence, just as those entering heaven will need a *"changed"* body, those entering *"hell"* will require a *"changed,"* *"immortal"* body that, unfortunately, will suffer the ravages of an eternal fire yet not be consumed. Insofar as the heavenly body is concerned, Paul and John both give easily understood descriptions:

Paul: *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. (Phil. 3:20-21)*

John: *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. (1 Jn. 3:2)*

Part 6: The Resurrection

WHO

I submit the scriptures teach that at the resurrection to occur on *"the last day"* includes *"all"* men, both the wicked and righteous. Then those raised and those who are alive at Christ's coming will *"all"* be *"changed"* and given immortal, incorruptible bodies before being sent to their reward of eternal life in heaven or eternal destruction in hell.

Jesus plainly taught that everyone will be raised simultaneously, there will be no dribbling of resurrected people through time! In John 5:28 He said *"the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth"* to either the *"resurrection of life"* or *"the resurrection of condemnation."* Who will *"come forth"*? *"all"*! Not *"some,"* not *"many,"* but *"all"*! That includes every single dead person, whether wicked or righteous. Jesus confirms this conclusion in John 6. In John 6 Jesus is only dealing with the righteous dead, but He says that *"at the last day"* He *"will raise...up"* *"everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him"* (v. 40). How many of the righteous dead will Jesus raise *"at the last day"*? *"Some"*? *"Many"*? No, *"everyone"*!

In 1 Corinthians 15:20-28 and 51-54 Paul agrees with Jesus in John 5 and 6 by making it clear that *"all"* will be raised at the same time. First, in verse 22 Paul makes it clear that death passes on *"all"* due to Adam and that *"all shall be made alive"* through *"Christ"* (v. 22). In verses 51-54 we find that at the sounding of *"the last trumpet"* (v. 52) which signals Christ's second coming many will be in the graves, but some *"shall not sleep"* (i.e., won't be dead). However, at that time *"shall all be changed"* (v. 51). Again, not *"some shall be changed"* or *"many shall be changed,"* but *"shall all be changed,"* E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E!! This change will consist of everyone receiving a body suitable for eternal life, whether that life is in heaven or hell (cf. Matt. 10:28; Mk. 9:43-48; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Jn. 3:2).

Paul's teaching in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 agrees with Jesus' teaching in John 5 and 6 and his own previous teaching in 1 Corinthians 15. In this passage Paul is only dealing with *"the dead in Christ"* (v. 16) and the righteous living (*"we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord,"* v. 15). However, anyone willing to give the passage a fair reading can only conclude that the entirety of all the righteous, whether dead or living, are under discussion and they all will receive their heavenly reward at this time. Again, there is no dribbling out of the resurrected, changed, immortal saints over time. It all happens simultaneously at the *"coming of the Lord"* (v. 15), when *"the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God"* (v. 16). There is a definite order with *"the dead in Christ will rise first"* to be followed by the righteous who are alive at the Lord's coming. Make no mistake, the passage makes it clear *"we"* (i.e., all the righteous whether dead or alive at the Lord's coming, v. 17 second sentence) *"shall be caught up together...in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."* (v. 17)

Conclusion: RE advocates would have us believe their teaching concerning the resurrection is harmless and not a fellowship issue. However, there is not one iota of difference between what they teach and what the false teachers at Corinth taught. Both deny a general resurrection of the dead and by doing so deny the resurrection of Christ. By denying Christ's resurrection they deny the very sign that *"declared"* Jesus *"to be the Son of God"* (Rom. 1:4). The sonship of Jesus is the very foundation upon which His church is built (Matt. 16:16-18; Acts 4:12) and our salvation depends! (cf. Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:19-23) Furthermore, by denying the resurrection RE advocates bring upon themselves the litany of negative consequences Paul outlines in 1 Corinthians 15:12-19:

- ☛ *"Christ is not risen"* (1 Cor. 15:13, 17 and the proof that He is *"the Son of God"* is null and void),
- ☛ The preaching of the apostles (and our preaching today) is *"vain"* (1 Cor. 15:14),
- ☛ Our *"faith is also vain"* (1 Cor. 15:14, 17),
- ☛ The apostles were *"false witnesses of God"* (1 Cor. 15:15),
- ☛ We *"are yet in our sins"* (1 Cor. 15:17),
- ☛ Christians who have already died *"in Christ are perished"* (1 Cor. 15:18),
- ☛ Our *"hope in Christ"* is limited to *"this life only"* (1 Cor. 15:19),
- ☛ And, *"we are of all men the most miserable"* (1 Cor. 15:19).

These consequences are too serious to ignore. Thus, I would offer this inspired advice to anyone even considering believing RE doctrine: *"Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits.' Awake to righteousness!"* (1 Cor. 15:33-34)

Part 7: Conclusion

As a reader if you've made it this far having carefully considered each section of this tract, I sincerely commend you! Exposing error is never a pleasant, palatable or joyful task, plus analyzing *Realized Eschatology* (RE) doctrine is quite tedious. I must admit this study has been one of the most difficult I've ever attempted. Studying RE has been time consuming, frustrating, and very taxing on my mental energy. Quite frankly I found Max King's books on RE to be some of the most difficult books to read that I've ever put into my hands. His writings make those of Mormonism and the Watchtower society a veritable "piece of cake" to read by comparison.

As we bring this study to a close I also want to reiterate what I stated in the introduction to this series:

I hold no personal animosity towards anyone who believes and/or teaches RE. My purpose in writing these articles is twofold: 1) to warn faithful brethren of this "*damnable heresy*." 2) to encourage those in the bondage of the RE theory to "*Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith*." (2 Cor. 13:5)

Showing RE advocates the seriousness of their error brings me no pleasure whatsoever. However, despite the protestations of some brethren, RE error is an extremely serious matter.

Those within the RE camp, and some without, seek to dismiss the differences between RE doctrine and biblical truth as just a "minor" difference over "end times" issues that are of no real consequence. Quite frankly, at the outset of my journey to understand RE doctrine I was somewhat sympathetic to that attitude. I developed this attitude because I found RE doctrine so outlandish I couldn't fathom any sober-minded Christian would give it a moment of serious consideration. After delving deeply into RE doctrine, however, my mind is now thoroughly and entirely convinced RE doctrine is a "*damnable heresy*" (2 Pet. 2:1).

Characterizing RE doctrine as a "*damnable heresy*" is not hyperbole nor is it meant to libel or embarrass RE adherents or sympathizers. I use this characterization because it is true and my heart's desire is to warn everyone, RE adherents included, of the extreme danger posed by this doctrine. Make no mistake, RE is not harmless! Please carefully consider the following ramifications of RE doctrine.

1) RE doctrine denies the resurrection of Christ! Please review *Part 6: The Resurrection*. RE doctrine unquestionably denies a general resurrection of both the righteous and wicked dead (Jn. 5:28-29). In doing so, whether willing to accept it or not, RE doctrine denies the resurrection of Christ! Remember, the resurrection of Christ and the general resurrection of the dead are a package deal (1 Cor. 15:12-19). RE advocates cannot "have their cake and eat it too." The general resurrection of the dead and the resurrection of Christ stand or fall together. Paul unequivocally tells us if there is no general resurrection of the dead then Christ did not rise from the dead: "*But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen*." (1 Cor. 15:13) In fact, Paul reiterates this very point twice more!

15 *More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either.* (1 Cor. 15:15, 16)

Denying the resurrection of Christ is, in my estimation, the most serious and egregious error of RE doctrine. Without Christ's resurrection the crowning proof He is the Son of God is lost (Rom. 1:4). If that is true, then Jesus is found to be a liar because He claimed to be the Son of God (Matt. 16:16-17; Jn. 3:18; 8:24; etc.) and, very importantly, Jesus then fails to meet the qualifications to be our Savior and, as Paul said,

...your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! 18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. (1 Cor. 15:17-19)

Furthermore, in regards to the second coming of Christ and the resurrection Paul said, "*Comfort one another with these words*." (1 Thess. 4:18) RE's denial of the resurrection finally and ultimately robs Christians of this "*comfort*." This ultimately leads to a loss of hope and the real possibility of gross infidelity. That is why Paul said "*Hymenaeus and Philetus*" were guilty of "*overthrow[ing] the faith of some*," because they, just as RE advocates, said "*the resurrection is already past*" (1 Tim. 2:17-18). That is serious business! The denial of the resurrection by some at Corinth was so serious Paul warned not to associate with such people as they were "*evil company*" that "*corrupts good character*" (1 Cor. 15:33, NIV). In this regard, it would do us well to take to heart the words of one commentator on this important verse:

"This verse (v. 29, cvt) can only mean one thing in this context. Paul is telling the Corinthians to cease associating with those among them who denied the resurrection of the dead. The influence of such men might not be evident at first, but it would nonetheless, erode their biblical basis for morality. At first, the false doctrine would appear to be an innocent theory about the dead; soon those who accepted it would reason, 'Why deny

Part 7: Conclusion

myself of this fleshly pleasure since there is no resurrection anyway?’ This truth is just as applicable today as ever before. Association with those who deny some of God’s revelation still corrupts good morality.” (Willis, *Truth Commentaries: 1 Corinthians*, p. 465)

2) **RE doctrine fractures the unity of the church!** Unity in the church is important, precious and required. On the eve of His crucifixion, unity was on the lips of our Savior as He uttered one of His last prayers (Jn. 17:20-23). New Testament unity requires Christians to *“speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”* (1 Cor. 1:10) RE doctrine makes Paul’s divine injunction impossible and shatters unity in several ways:

- ☛ **RE robs Christians of a common faith.** In Ephesians 4:4-6 Paul announces God’s platform for unity based on seven *“ones.”* Notice in verse five Paul mentions *“one faith.”* The *“one faith”* is the system of doctrine called the *“gospel”* (Rom. 1:16-17; Jude 3), the new covenant, the New Testament. RE’s teaching turns the concept of *“one faith”* upside down because in point after point RE doctrine twists the gospel into a tortured, unrecognizable mess. Thus, RE doctrine is not the true gospel of Christ, but is *“a different gospel”* (Gal. 1:6) and not the *“one faith”* (Eph. 4:5) of which Paul and the other inspired writers of the New Testament spoke. That being the case, RE teaches and practices a perverted and *“accursed”* gospel (Gal. 1:7-9) as compared to the true gospel revealed in the New Testament. Thus, RE doctrine is not *“the doctrine of Christ”* (2 Jn. 9) and one adhering to it *“does not have God”* (2 Jn. 9) and cannot receive our fellowship (2 Jn. 10). It pains my heart to point this out, but I cannot deny the truth.
- ☛ **RE robs Christians of a common hope.** Once again, in Ephesians 4 Paul’s inspired platform for unity prescribes *“one hope”* (v. 4). The New Testament provides Christians *“a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”* (1 Pet. 1:3). Among other things, this *“one hope”* of the gospel provides for Christians to *“attain to the resurrection from the dead”* (Phil. 3:11). The Christian’s *“living hope”* (1 Pet. 1:3) is none other than the *“resurrection of the dead”* (Acts 24:15) when *“God...will also raise us up by His power”* (1 Cor. 6:14), *“will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body”* (Phil. 3:21), *“gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (1 Cor. 15:57), and supplies us with an abundant entrance *“into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”* (2 Pet. 1:11). Sadly we do not share this common and glorious *“one hope”* with RE adherents, hence, unity is impossible.
- ☛ **RE interferes with worship.** Due to its false teachings concerning the second coming, end of the world, and resurrection RE doctrine interferes with our worship. First, most RE adherents refuse to sing any songs with references to a yet future second coming, end of the world, universal final judgment, or resurrection from the dead. However, God’s word requires Christians to speak *“to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”* (Eph. 5:19). Our song service is divinely designed so that we teach and admonish *“one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs”* (Col. 3:16). RE adherents make these divine instructions impossible to follow when they refuse to sing songs teaching legitimate and sound biblical doctrine. Second, how could an RE adherent join in a hearty *“amen”* to any prayer that referred to a yet future second coming, end of the world, universal final judgment, or bodily resurrection? True unity in worship is futile and hopeless under such circumstances.
- ☛ **RE advocates will ultimately fellowship error.** In the course of my study of RE doctrine it became clear to me that those holding to it ultimately make RE the only test of fellowship. All one has to do is look at the history of the doctrine’s champion Max King. King has even trademarked RE doctrine under the moniker *Transmillennialism*®. King and his cohorts now extend fellowship to anyone as long as they pledge allegiance to RE orthodoxy. They and other RE believers demonstrate the ultimate in *“hobby riding”* as all of their teaching and preaching revolves around RE theory. As a result, unlike Paul, RE advocates are unable to claim they teach the *“whole counsel of God”* (Acts 20:27). Ultimately RE adherents don’t care if a group teaches error on the plan of salvation or the work, worship and organization of the church, etc. All that matters in the end is agreement on their hobby. As the old saying goes, *“birds of a feather flock together.”* Some adherents of RE will deny this conclusion, but the fact their own religious life revolves almost entirely and completely around this issue says all that needs be said.

3) **RE denies Christ’s ability to bring His reign to a successful conclusion.** In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul makes it crystal clear the resurrection of the dead is inextricably linked to the successful reign of Christ. Hear the inspired apostle:

20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. **21** For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. **22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. **23** But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming. **24** Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. **25** For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. **26** The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. (1 Cor. 15:20-26)

Part 7: Conclusion

How long will Christ reign and what will signal the successful end of His reign? The answer is simple: Christ's reign will come to a successful conclusion when *"He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death."* (vv. 25, 26) How will Christ destroy death? He will do so through *"the resurrection of the dead"* as He makes all men, both the righteous and the wicked (vv. 21-22; Jn. 5:28-29; Acts 24:15), *"alive"* (v. 22) and gives each a *"changed"* body (v. 51) entirely suited to eternal life (vv. 35-49) whether that life is *"eternal life"* (Matt. 25:46) in heaven (i.e., *"into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,"* 2 Pet. 1:11) or *"everlasting punishment"* (Matt. 25:46) with *"everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels"* (Matt. 25:41; cf. Mk. 9:42-48). When Christ raises all men, it is only then that *"this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality"* (v. 54). And, it is only *"then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'"* (v. 54). Death ends only when all men are resurrected and this coincides with *"then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father"* (v.24) bringing His reign to a successful conclusion. No resurrection? Then no successful conclusion to the reign of Christ!

4) **RE makes the Christian's "work of the Lord" vain.** Paul brings his discussion of the resurrection of the dead to a conclusion with these words:

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Cor. 15:58)

Paul's grand conclusion and closing words are meant to encourage Christians to faithful service. This faithful service is only beneficial to us if indeed there is *"a resurrection of the dead"*! If there is no resurrection to look forward to there is no motivation for us to abound *"in the work of the Lord"* because our *"labor"* would be in vain! This is precisely what Paul was discussing in vv. 29-32. For *"...if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?"* (v. 29) And why did Paul and his fellow gospel preachers *"stand in jeopardy every hour"* preaching the gospel *"If the dead do not rise?"* To be baptized in hope of the resurrection, to preach the hope of the resurrection, to risk life and limb for the message of the resurrection, or to abound *"in the work of the Lord"* makes no sense whatsoever if there is no resurrection of the dead. Without the resurrection we would find much more profit in living it up in the here and now (i.e., *"Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die";* v. 32) because that would be all there is to life!

Conclusion: As we bring this study to a close several thoughts come to mind. First, I want to make it crystal clear to everyone that there is so very much more that could be said. The errors of RE are legion and we've only touched on a few of the major ones. Like the false doctrine Paul mentioned in 2 Timothy 2:17 RE is a *"cancer."* It continues to grow, mutate and metastasize, therefore, I urge the brethren to take it seriously and not assume it is so *"off the wall"* that it will not affect you or your local congregation. It must be fought tooth and nail, because it is an *"unfruitful works of darkness"* with which we can *"have no fellowship"* but must *"rather expose"* (Eph. 5:11).

Second, some words come to mind I heard a long, long time ago from a dear preacher. At the close of this good brother's sermons he always said, *"Now its decision time."* As we finish our study of RE doctrine it truly is *"decision time"*! Souls are at stake! It pains my heart to say so, but God's word constrains me to tell the truth: RE doctrine is a *"damnable heresy"*! God's word commands us to warn those in wickedness and error and if we don't God says, *"his blood I will require at your hand"* (Ezek. 33:8). Hence, we plead with those caught in the web of RE error to flee this *"different"* and *"accursed"* gospel (Gal. 1:6-9) and return to the truth, to the *"old paths, where the good way is"* (Jer. 6:16). The goal is not to win an argument, but to turn *"a sinner from the error of his way"* and *"save a soul from death"* (Jas. 5:20). To those brethren who believe RE doctrine is of no real consequence and can be ignored it is also *"decision time"*! Make no mistake: RE is a *"damnable heresy"*! RE is not a harmless difference over *"end times"* teachings! RE doctrine is a *"different gospel"* and thus those preaching and believing it are *"accursed"* (Gal. 1:6-9). Those teaching and believing RE doctrine are transgressing and do *"not abide in the doctrine of Christ,"* hence, they *"do not have God,"* and cannot be received without sharing in their *"evil deeds"* (2 Jn. 9-11). We cannot idly stand by and say nothing concerning this error. To ignore it is to give it our tacit approval. To ignore it endangers their souls and our souls per Ezekiel 33! To ignore it allows the leavening influence of error to work its evil throughout the body of Christ unchallenged and places a congregation tolerating it in danger of having Christ remove their *"lampstand"* (Rev. 2:5) of faithfulness! Therefore, for all of us *"its decision time"*! As Joshua said many centuries ago: *"choose you this day whom ye will serve"* (Josh. 24:15).

Finally, in the long ago Elijah engaged the false prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel saying, *"How long halt ye between two opinions?"* (1 Kgs. 18:21) It's time RE advocates answer that same challenging question. Realized eschatology and the genuine gospel are mutually exclusive; they cannot peacefully coexist. As long as RE lurks in the shadows let's stop beating about the bush and pretending we *"all speak the same thing,"* that there are *"no divisions among"* us, and that we *"be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."* (1 Cor. 1:10) As long as RE doctrine seeks to work its leavening influence unity is impossible and Jesus' prayer for unity (Jn. 17:20-23) goes unanswered.

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