

AS A THIEF IN THE NIGHT : PART 1

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Within the Christian body today, there is a sharp division between those persons who believe that Christ will return unexpectedly at any moment, and those Christians who are convinced that before Jesus can return for His elect bride, certain events must transpire; events which said Christians believe have not happened yet; at least not according to their understanding of the Holy Scriptures.

These various events include the expected signing of some type of seven-year "Holy Covenant", the presumed construction of a final Jewish temple on Mount Moriah in East Jerusalem -- and thus the re-institution of the daily sacrifice, also known as the morning and the evening oblation -- the breaking of the aforementioned Holy Covenant, the invasion of Jerusalem by the armies of the Beast and the setting up of the "Abomination of Desolation", followed by the Mark of the Beast and the Great Tribulation, the plagues of the Two Sackcloth Witnesses, and finally, the Rapture of the Saints. All of these events form a part of a particular interpretation of Bible prophecy which is

known as Futurism.

Of course, the precise order in which these various events are expected to occur is a considerable subject of debate amongst those Christians who embrace the Futurist point of view. In short, there is really no consensus. Thus, if you talk to ten different Christians who lean towards a Futurist perspective, you will hear quite a variety of opinions. But regardless of whether or not Jesus is expected to return at any moment, or after the aforementioned events occur, all of these Christians embrace the same general Futurist theological perspective. In other words, they are convinced that Christ's Return, and all of these other events, are yet to occur. They did not happen in the distant past, as Preterists believe.

As I explain in other BBB articles, when I wrote the original version of this article back in August of 1999, I myself was a very solid Futurist. If you were to have asked me back then if I thought that Jesus Christ would be returning soon, I would have rattled off the very same aforementioned list of expected events with full confidence, without any degree of hesitation whatsoever. That is how sure I was of my personal beliefs at the time. No one would have been able to persuade me to think otherwise.

The key question at that time in 1999 was whether or not God's children were really meant to understand the timing of Jesus' Second Coming. In order to properly answer this question, as is my custom, I believe that the best approach to take, is to actually examine some of the verses which are commonly used to support the idea of Christ's unexpected arrival. Let us begin by reading what the Apostle Paul wrote in his first Epistle to the Thessalonian brethren:

"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."

1 Thessalonians 5:1-3, KJV

On the surface, these verses appear to support the idea of the Lord returning as a thief in the night for the entire world. However, is that what they are actually saying? The main clue in solving this mystery, is found in Paul's usage of the word "they". It is obvious that Paul was writing this

Epistle to the Christian brethren in Thessalonica. But who were the "they" to whom he was referring? Were the Christian brethren the ones who would be saying "Peace and safety"? I don't believe so. At least not if they knew the Scriptures. Are the Christians the ones upon whom would come the sudden destruction so that they would not escape? Again, I really doubt it.

It seems obvious to me then, that the Apostle Paul must have therefore been referring to someone else. In fact, I remain convinced that, in a very general sense, he was referring to the people who had rejected the truth of God's Word. These are the ones who would walk in spiritual darkness. That is to say, they would lack understanding concerning Jesus' Second Coming; but not those Christians who discerned the signs of the times. They would be expecting His eminent Return. Consider what the Lord said to the unbelieving Jews in the sixteenth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew:

"The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"
Matthew 16:1-3, KJV

The previous verses clearly reveal that even in Jesus' day, the hardhearted Jewish religionists simply did not possess the spiritual discernment to recognize Him as the Messiah. They were so earthly and carnal in their thinking, that they were totally blind to the truth. Jesus' message seemed like utter foolishness, and in fact total blasphemy to them. It is for this reason, that they demanded signs of Him, because they didn't have any real faith. As the Apostle Paul wrote:

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."
1 Corinthians 2:14, KJV

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."
1 Corinthians 1:18, KJV

Exactly who was it who had blinded them in this way? If we consider what Jesus said regarding who was the master of the unbelieving Jewish religionists, and then look to several of the Apostle Paul's Epistles, we can gain a very clear answer, as we see by the following group of Bible verses:

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

John 8:44, KJV

"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:"

Ephesians 2:2, KJV

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

2 Corinthians 4:4, KJV

Obviously then, it is Satan the adversary himself, the false god of this world, who since ages past, blinds the hearts, and dulls the minds of those who receive not the message of the Gospel, beginning with the Jews thousands of years ago. With this understanding, let us take another look now at what Paul wrote to the brethren at Thessalonica. If I may paraphrase here for just a moment, what Paul is telling the brethren is "Look; I know I don't really need to be writing to you about these things, because I know that you already understand them."

It is right after this, that Paul then employs the use of that word "they". He is using it in order to show a sharp contrast between those Christians who understand the events surrounding the Lord's Second Coming, and those people who do not. That is to say, the non-believers, the people of the world, those individuals who would be living during the time of the Apostasy. That is to say, during the "falling away". That is exactly what the Koine Greek word "apostasia" means.

Not only that, but if you read the second chapter of Paul's second Epistle to the Thessalonians, in conjunction with my article "Who Hindered the Antichrist?", you will quickly

understand that Paul is primarily directing his words to the unbelieving Jews who would fall under the strong delusion of their false messiah, Moshiach ben David. This phrase simply means Messiah, son of David. I discuss this individual in my eleven-part series entitled "Who Is Moshiach ben David?", which you will find listed at the end of this same article.

It is because of their hardhearted unbelief, and because of their falling away from the truth, that sudden destruction was indeed destined to come upon those mockers and deceivers who would be eating and drinking, and marrying, just as it was in Noah's day before the Flood. Isn't this precisely what Jesus Himself, as well as the Apostles Peter and Paul, prophesied would happen as one of the signs of the end of the age? Consider the following verses:

"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Matthew 24:37-39, KJV

"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."

2 Timothy 3:13, KJV

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 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 the creation . . . But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

2 Peter 3:3-4, 10, KJV

Please notice that in both cases, Peter and Paul make a very clear link between the unbelievers and the mockers, and Jesus returning as a thief in the night. Both Apostles are telling their readers the very same thing. They are both saying that it is upon them -- that is to say, upon the unbelievers -- that the destruction would come. It is also upon them that the Day of the Lord would come as a thief in the night when they least expected it. Once again I am reminded of the prophetic

Psalm Two. Consider the following group of verses:

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

Psalm 2:1-12, KJV

Returning to Paul's first Epistle to the Thessalonians, in his letter, Paul is obviously writing about two different groups of people. That is to say, the Christian Believers, and the reprobates. Paul is addressing his Epistle to the believing Church at Thessalonica, in order to tell them what will happen to the unbelievers, and NOT to the God-fearing, Bible-believing Christian brethren. In fact, if we read the very next verse -- that is to say, verse four -- Paul again makes a clear, unmistakable contrast between the believing brethren, and the unbelievers of the world when he states the following:

"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."

1 Thessalonians 5:4, KJV

It truly amazes me how some Christians are so quick to quote the first three verses from this chapter regarding the Day of the Lord arriving as a thief in the night, but then they completely ignore or disregard verse four, which totally contradicts what they are saying. Either they do it out of ignorance, not even knowing that the verse exists, because they depend upon some man to teach them God's Word, or else they do know of its existence, and they purposely choose to

ignore it, because it totally exposes the lie behind their belief and false doctrine.

My friends, there is simply no way around this. The Apostle Paul is clearly saying that the Christian Believers were not in darkness! They already knew, or at least they would know in the Lord's chosen time, when Christ would be returning. So then, it is clear that verses one through three of this chapter are actually talking about the unbelievers who would be caught by surprise, while verse four is referring to the Christian Believers. That is to say, to those Christians who would be watching and waiting patiently for Jesus' Return, while they faithfully continued to do their work for the Lord. As a matter of fact, please notice what the next few verses say after that. Paul is showing a further comparison between Believers and non-believers, as we see here:

"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation."

1 Thessalonians 5:4-8, KJV

There is no need to try to interpret these verses, as their meaning is quite obvious. Christian Believers, whether they lived two thousand years ago or today, are in the Light. We are the Children of Light. We know the truth of God's Word. Back in 1997 I authored an inspiring two-part article about this very subject entitled "The Children of Light: Are You One of Us?". I hope that you will find the time to read it. So the point is, they are the ones who would be in spiritual darkness. They are the ones who would be surprised. Why so? Because they were the children of darkness who had fully rejected the spiritual light of the Scriptures, and in so doing, rejected Christ Himself. As Jesus said in John chapter three:

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."

John 3:19-20, KJV

The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness are as different as night and day, as water and oil, as bitter and sweet. This is why the Apostle Paul was inspired to write the following verse:

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

2 Corinthians 6:14, KJV

So the Christians would be patiently waiting for the Lord's Return, even as they were already doing at the time that Paul wrote the previous verses. Once some of the signs which Jesus had warned them about actually began to happen, they would be able to begin to mark off the days, exactly as I demonstrate in the three-part series entitled "Last Seven Years Chart", and also in the six-part series called "The Great Tribulation and the Rapture". The unbelieving people of the world would indeed be completely caught by surprise by the Second Coming of Christ.

But not those Christians who understood the prophetic events of the times. They would not be so foolish. They would watch and pray, exactly as the Lord had advised them to do. As I point out in the aforementioned articles, God wanted them to understand. It is for this reason, that Jesus gave them many signs to watch for. It is likewise why He mentioned to them the prophecies which are found in the Book of Daniel. As Daniel wrote:

"And they that understand among the people shall instruct many . . ."

Daniel 11:33, KJV

If they were truly wise, if they really knew the Word, then they would understand and be prepared, and not be taken by surprise like the rest of the unbelieving world. Not only would they understand, but as Daniel writes, they would be instructing others, and letting them know exactly what was happening. In fact, that is what some of them were already doing, and by God's grace, they continued to do it for as long as possible.

Furthermore, that is why Satan was out to get them. That is, because they were telling the world that his days were truly

numbered. The False Messiah's days were also numbered. The Beast's days were surely numbered. The False Prophet's days were numbered. And Babylon the Great's days were numbered as well. Divine judgment was coming for them all. Thus, not long after Jesus returned to Heaven, Satan began doing his very best to try to slow them down, and to stop their mouths through his human puppets -- such as the unbelieving Jews, and later the Romans as well -- but his and their ultimate destruction, was already assured.

Returning to our main discussion, there exists Scriptural evidence which adds even more weight to the idea that the thief in the night scenario was a conditional possibility which was clearly, and directly, related to the degree of belief -- or unbelief -- on the part of the participants. Please consider also what the Spirit said to the Church at Sardis in the Book of Revelation:

"Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee."

Revelation 3:3, KJV

Allow me to ask you an easy question. Is the Lord definitely saying that they would not know when He would be coming? No! He very explicitly says "If therefore thou shalt not watch". In other words, the Lord is saying "If you are watching, you will know when I am about to come. However, if you are not watching, if you are not keeping an eye on the signs of the times as I warned you to do, then I will surprise you like a thief in the night, just as will also occur with all of the unbelievers and mockers of the world." This same thought is repeated thirteen chapters later where we also read the following:

"Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

Revelation 16:15, KJV

Again it becomes very apparent, that if they were watching and waiting soberly, watching for the final events to be fulfilled, and counting off the days, then they wouldn't be caught naked or ashamed. They would not be like the foolish virgins who let their oil run out. The Lord's mention of "keepeth his garments" is something I have spoken about in a

few other articles, such as in the series "Once Upon a Time: A True Story". It is the same wedding garment which Jesus was referring to in His Parable of the Marriage Feast. It is the Garment of Righteousness which we all receive when we accept and believe in Christ, and allow Him to wash us clean with His Sacrificial Blood. This is the only way in which we can truly be made righteous before the Father, have all of our sins blotted out, and have our relationship with Him restored. Consider the following Bible verses which mention the Garment of Salvation and the Robe of Righteousness:

"I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem."

Job 29:14, KJV

"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." Isaiah 61:10, KJV

"Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen."

Matthew 22:8-14, KJV

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels . . . I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."

Revelation 3:5, 18, KJV

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

Revelation 6:9-11, KJV

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands . . . And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Revelation 7:9, 13-14, KJV

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."

Revelation 19:7-9, KJV

While I have now clearly demonstrated how some people have erroneously misinterpreted the "thief in the night" verses, there are other popular verses which are often used by those Christians who insist that Christians would not know when Jesus would arrive. These verses include the following:

"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only . . . Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come . . . Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh . . .

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

Matthew 24:34-36, 42, 44, 25:13, KJV

At the beginning of Matthew chapter twenty-four, the Lord's Disciples asked Him regarding what signs would precede the end of the age -- meaning the Prophetic Age which had been described to Daniel in the Seventy Weeks Prophecy by the Angel Gabriel -- and His Coming. Thus, upon reading that entire chapter, we know that in the previous verses, Jesus is referring to the actual generation which would both see and experience all of the signs which He describes for His Disciples in that chapter. These signs and markers include such things as severe earthquakes, widespread famine, wars and rumors of war, family betrayal, persecution against the Lord's followers, the preaching of the Gospel in the whole world, etc.

It is after the Lord has described these various signs to the Disciples, which He clearly links to the prophecies of Daniel concerning the Abomination of Desolation, that the Lord makes the above remarks. Now, let me ask you something. Why would Jesus describe all of these very specific signs to the Disciples, and then turn around and say that no one will know when He will return, except for His Father in Heaven? Does that make any sense to you? Doesn't it seem somewhat contradictory to say, "Now, fellows, all of these things are going to happen, but you still are not going to know"? What then is the purpose of even giving the signs to them? Why even tell them to watch and pray, if they still would not know when He would be returning?

Obviously, there must be some misunderstanding with regard to how the previous verses have been interpreted by certain modern Christians. It would be as if I were to prophesy and say "There is going to be a terrible two-car accident just twenty miles ahead of you, at the intersection of routes five and ten, at exactly 5:00 P.M., between a red pick-up truck and a blue convertible". But then I tell you "But you are not going to know when or where it is going to happen, so watch out!" Now doesn't that sound silly? Didn't I just provide you with all of the important details so that you can make sure that you will avoid the accident by watching for the signs I just gave to you?

Please go to part two for the conclusion of this article.

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AS A THIEF IN THE NIGHT : PART 2

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Jesus Gave Disciples Signs Of His Return So That They Would Watch And Be Ready, Futurists Believe Jesus Was Speaking To Our Current Generation Regarding His Return, This Generation, Doctrinal U-Turn In My Personal Life, A Disturbing Futurist Attitude, The Important Of Biblical And Historical Research, Bible Prophecy And Secular History Complement Each Other, An Incomplete Historical Record, Theologians And Historians At Times Disagree, Importance Of Faith, Trust God's Word Or The Historical Record, Bible Doesn't Contradict Itself, God Does Not Lie, Serious Bible Study Is Lacking In Many Christians, Spoon-Fed On Social Networks, No Strong Foundation In God's Word, People Who Study Scriptures Through A Biased Doctrinal Lens, Compare Bible Verse With Verse, Fly-By-Night Doctrines, It Requires Humility To Admit Our Doctrinal Errors, Verses Which Pinpoint Time Frame Of Christ's Return: I Come Quickly, For The Time Is At Hand, Things Which Must Shortly Come To Pass, The Last Days, The Coming Of The Lord Draweth Nigh, End Of All Things Is At Hand, It Is The Last Time, I Will Come To You, I Will Come Again, Spirit Of Urgency, Jesus Told Them To Watch And Pray, He Promised A Return During Their Lifetimes, Personal Heartfelt Message To Futurists, Suggested Reading

Continuing our discussion from part one, in a similar manner, in Matthew chapter twenty-four, Jesus has likewise laid out a prophetic roadmap of the future. This He did, not so that His followers could just avoid something, but rather so that they could make sure that they were really watching and ready for His Return. I believe that this is the key to determining how we can sort out all of the modern doctrinal confusion which revolves around Jesus' Return. In other words, I'm referring

to the ongoing debate between Preterists and Futurists, and between those folks who claim that Jesus can come any minute, and those who insist that a certain list of events need to occur first.

Now, according to Futurist thinking, given how much time has transpired since the Lord spoke those prophecies, they have arrived at the conclusion that Jesus was not directing those words to His First Century followers, or to anyone else who lived during that generation for that matter. The Futurist view is in fact that Jesus' words were only directed to the generation which would be alive at the time of His Second Coming. That is to say, to His followers who are currently alive in our OWN generation. This current generation would understand and experience the signs which Jesus described in Matthew 24, so the Futurists claim.

In short, when Jesus said "this generation", Futurists are convinced that He did not mean First Century Israel. Rather, He meant the generation which saw the fulfillment of all of the signs. This is the first assumption that many Futurists make. The second assumption is that First Century Christians did not have to know. They did not have to understand. Even the Angels did not have to know or understand either. Or at least so say the Futurists. The Futurist asks "What point would there be for them to know and understand? How could they possibly profit from such information if Jesus was not going to return for two thousand years? They couldn't profit from it, but we today most certainly can!"

So again, those are two of the primary assumptions which are made by Futurist-leaning Christians. As I mentioned in part one, until over a dozen years ago -- up to 2011-2012 -- I in fact thought and believed exactly like them. I used the very same reasoning, and I was absolutely convinced that I was right. Well, in a doctrinal sense, a lot has happened in my life since that time. Thanks to the prodding of the Lord's Holy Spirit, as I fully explain in some of my other articles such as "Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?", I was forced to make a complete U-turn in my life, insofar as my beliefs are concerned.

Now, you will no doubt have noticed that several times I used the word "assumption" in the previous paragraphs with regard to what the Futurists believe. The reason why I did that is because that is exactly what they are. You see, for some time now, I have noticed a disturbing attitude amongst some of my

online Futurist-leaning friends. That attitude seems to be that unless they have seen it with their own eyes, or unless there is some clear, historical proof to substantiate a claim, then it just never happened. Tragically, they apply this very same attitude and criteria to the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Some of them want historical proof that something happened as the Bible said it would happen.

Now, to be clear, I in large part agree with them. In fact, if you invest the time in reading some of my other prophecy related articles and series, you will discover that they are literally packed with historical information. Furthermore, I would dare say that over the past thirty-two years since I first began my online Christian ministry, I have personally invested literally thousands of hours in serious research, digging into ancient historical documents, reading a lot of Bible dictionaries, encyclopedias and lexicons, etc. So, yes, I definitely believe in historical research. In fact, I am quite convinced that Bible prophecy and secular history fit together like a hand in a glove. Furthermore, I am likewise convinced that it is next to impossible to properly grasp some of the deeper prophecies in the Bible -- such as the Book of Daniel -- unless one has seriously delved into the annals of history.

However, at the same time, I also recognize and understand that not everything that is contained in the Scriptures can be validated by secular history. This is due to a variety of reasons. Sometimes, due to time, decay, or intentional destruction, the original autographs -- that is to say, the manuscripts which were written by the original authors -- no longer exist. In other cases, we have copies of copies of copies, or even just fragments of parchments, cylinders or clay tablets. In short, while we know a lot about ancient history, we certainly do not know everything, because the historical record is spotty in some places. Furthermore, you would be surprised to learn how much disagreement there is between different historians, scholars, theologians, etc.

But the main point I am getting at is the following. Just because no historical evidence exists to validate certain Biblical events, is not sufficient reason to assume that something did not happen. In other words, my friends, it comes down to faith. Either you have faith in God's Word, or else you have faith in the secular historical record. If they contradict each other in some way, or if there is no historical evidence to verify a Biblical event, what

are you going to do? Who are you going to trust? So this is the problem I see with some Futurists. They lack faith to believe some things just because the Bible says so.

But there is more to it than that. If there is one thing of which I am certain, it is that the Bible doesn't contradict itself. As I have explained on previous occasions, my view is that if there are any seeming contradictions, or if we are in any way confused regarding particular verses, the problem is NOT with the Bible itself, but rather with our personal understanding of the Scriptures. The second point is this. I am convinced that God does not lie. If in the Bible He said something, or did something, or stated that He would do something, then I believe it. Allow me to share a few related Bible verses with you:

"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"
Numbers 23:19, KJV

"He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."
Deuteronomy 32:4, KJV

"Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth."
Psalm 31:5, KJV

"That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes."
Isaiah 65:16, KJV

"And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not."
John 8:45, KJV

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
John 14:6, KJV

"God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged."

Romans 3:4, KJV

"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie,
promised before the world began;"

Titus 1:2, KJV

So if God the Father said that He was going to do something, then I believe it. If Jesus said that He was likewise going to do something, I believe that as well. Last of all, if the Apostles said some particular thing in the Gospels, or in the Epistles, or in the Book of Revelation, then I believe that they are also telling the truth. I have no reason to believe that they intentionally lied about anything. Now, back to the Futurist assumptions I mentioned earlier. Quite frankly, I am convinced that they are in serious error. Furthermore, I am convinced that either knowingly, or ignorantly, they are in denial of certain things that Jesus said, and certain things which the Apostles wrote. More on this point in a moment.

One major problem I see with a lot of modern Christians is that when it comes to serious Bible study, they seem to be rather adverse to it. Even on the social networks I see it a lot. Their attention spans seem to be so short, and many of them don't like to read lengthy dissertations. They just want quick little sound bites. They want memes. They want everything spoon-fed to them in small chunks. But as far as serious Bible study, and serious historical research, many of them are very lacking. Sadly, it is for that very reason that so many of them have become quite deceived by online preachers and wannabe prophets.

Why do so many of them become deceived? Because they do not have a strong foundation in God's Word, and thus they are carried about by every wind of strange doctrine. You see, if they DID have a strong foundation in the Scriptures, then just as occurred with me quite a few years ago, they would realize that Futurism is not only flawed, but it is in fact in contradiction to quite a few New Testament Bible verses.

Even when some of them do undertake some level of Bible study and research, they do it the wrong way. They start off on the wrong foot. What do I mean by this? Basically, when they read the Scriptures, they do so through a type of doctrinal lens. They begin with preconceived ideas, certain biases, as well as particular doctrinal leanings. Sadly, the end result is that rather reading and accepting the Bible for exactly what it says, they read it from the perspective of what they want

to believe. In other words, they try to conform God's Word to what they already believe, instead of conforming their beliefs to what the Scriptures actually say.

Another problem is that they don't carefully and prayerfully compare Scripture with Scripture. Instead, what some of them will do is simply take several verses which seem to support their ideas, and make a doctrine out of them. This is wrong, wrong, wrong! We must consider the full counsel of God's Word in order to arrive at Spirit-led conclusions. As the Apostle Paul wrote, we need to rightly divide the word of truth, as we see by the following verse:

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

2 Timothy 2:15, KJV

So the above are some of the problems I have observed with some of my online Christian brethren. The last point I want to make before sharing a list of Bible verses with you is the following. This point is very important. As long as we lack true humility, we will never be able to admit when we have erred in a doctrinal sense. We won't admit it to ourselves, we won't admit it to God, and we most certainly won't admit it to our brethren. We would rather go down with the ship, as they say.

However, if we adopt this staunch position, in the end, we are only hurting ourselves, and also stunting our spiritual growth. Over a dozen years ago when the Lord began to reveal to me my own doctrinal errors, I had an important choice to make. I could either humbly accept what I believed the Lord was showing me in the Scriptures, or I could stubbornly and proudly resist it, and cling to my own misguided ideas. My friends, I really wanted the truth. Thus, I embraced what I was being shown.

So, then, for those Futurist-leaning Christians who embrace the views I mentioned in the first part of this article, I ask you to carefully and prayerfully consider the following list of Bible verses. These are some of the very same verses which the Lord pointed out to me more than a dozen years ago in order to show me that I was in error. If you would like to acquire a deeper understanding of these verses other than what I offer in the section below, then I invite you to read my companion series entitled "Jesus Christ's Return" Have We

Been Deceived?". You will find it listed at the end of this same article. Let's begin with two things which Jesus said in the Gospels. Please note that for the sake of emphasis, I have placed certain words in uppercase letters in all of these verses. Please pay particular note to THE CONTEXT of each verse. In other words, notice exactly WHO it was spoken to or written to:

"But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, YE SHALL NOT HAVE GONE OVER THE CITIES OF ISRAEL, TILL THE SON OF MAN BE COME."
Matthew 10:23, KJV

"Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, IF I WILL THAT HE TARRY TILL I COME, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, IF I WILL THAT HE TARRY TILL I COME, what is that to thee? This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true."
John 21:20-24, KJV

Turning to the Book of Revelation, we find eight important verses which clearly establish the time frame for when the Lord said He would return. Please note that some of these things were spoken to the Seven Churches which were in Asia during the First Century AD. These things were spoken to THEM, and NOT to us today:

"Behold, I COME QUICKLY: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."
Revelation 3:11, KJV

"Behold, I COME QUICKLY: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book . . . And, behold, I COME QUICKLY; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be . . . He which testifieth these things saith, SURELY I COME QUICKLY. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."
Revelation 22:7, 12, 20, KJV

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written

therein: FOR THE TIME IS AT HAND."

Revelation 1:3, KJV

"And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: FOR THE TIME IS AT HAND."

Revelation 22:10, KJV

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:"

Revelation 1:1, KJV

"And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY BE DONE."

Revelation 22:6, KJV

My dear friends, it is difficult to ignore the spirit of urgency and anticipation in which the Book of Revelation is written. We see this very same spirit and attitude of strong anticipation in the writings of the Apostles as well. They clearly write as if they are expecting the Rapture of the Saints and Jesus' Return to occur in the near future, and in their lifetimes. They do NOT write as if it is some far-off event which will occur in the distant future long after they are dead. If you doubt that this is so, then please consider the following group of verses, paying particular attention to the words which I have again placed in uppercase letters. I include a personal explanatory note after each set of verses:

"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass IN THE LAST DAYS, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:"

Acts 2:16-18, KJV

NOTE #1: In Acts 2:16-18, the Apostle Peter -- who had just been filled with the Holy Spirit -- is clearly saying two things: Joel's prophecy was being fulfilled at that time during the First Century, and that period was also the Last Days. The phrase "in the last days" does NOT mean from 30 AD to the 21st Century, as some modern, Futurist-leaning Bible

teachers erroneously teach. That is a false doctrine of men. Peter is actually referring to the final years of Daniel's "Seventy Weeks Prophecy", which covers a span of 490 years ending in possibly 70 AD -- which was in the middle of the First Jewish-Roman War when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed -- or in 73 AD at the end of the war when the fortress of Masada was taken.

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that WE WHICH ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN [meaning Paul and other First Century Christians] unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then WE WHICH ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN [meaning Paul and other First Century Christians] shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

1 Thessalonians 4:14-18, KJV

NOTE #2: The fact that in 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18, the Apostle Paul includes himself by saying "we" is clear proof that he was fully expecting Christ's soon return, and he was hoping to still be alive to witness it himself.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath IN THESE LAST DAYS spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;"

Hebrews 1:1-2, KJV

NOTE #3: In Hebrews 1:1-2, the phrase "lasts days" refer to the very end of the Prophet Daniel's 70 weeks -- or 490 years -- prophecy. It has nothing to do with our modern times, as Futurists claim.

"For yet a little while, and he that shall come [meaning Jesus] WILL COME, and WILL NOT TARRY."

Hebrews 10:37, KJV

NOTE #4: In Hebrews 10:37, the phrase "a little while" does NOT mean 2,000 years in the future as the Futurists claim. We are also told that Jesus will not tarry. The writer is obviously expecting Christ's soon return.

"Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together FOR THE LAST DAYS . . . Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for THE COMING OF THE LORD DRAWETH NIGH."

James 5:2-3, 7-8, KJV

NOTE #5: In James 5:2-3, 7-8, the Apostle James is likewise confirming that it was the Last Days, and he was convinced that Jesus would be returning soon.

"But the END OF ALL THINGS IS AT HAND: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."

1 Peter 4:7, KJV

NOTE #6: 1 Peter 4:7 confirms the phrase "in these last days" mentioned in Hebrews 1:1-2 above.

"Little children, IT IS THE LAST TIME: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby WE KNOW THAT IT IS THE LAST TIME."

1 John 2:18, KJV

NOTE #7: In 1 John 2:18, not once, but twice, the Apostle John tells his readers that it is the Last Time, or the very end of the Prophet Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy. Notice how very sure that John is about this. That is why he uses the words "We know that it is the last time." And then John is given the amazing Book of Revelation.

Personally, I can only arrive at one conclusion, and that is that Peter, James and John -- who were the Lord's inner circle -- as well as the Apostle Paul, were all convinced that Jesus would return during their lifetimes, exactly as He had promised them in the following group of verses:

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I WILL COME AGAIN, AND RECEIVE YOU unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also . . . I will not leave you comfortless: I WILL COME TO

YOU."

John 14:2-3, 18, KJV

How can so many modern, Futurist-leaning Christians continue to resist the plain truth of the Scriptures? So as you can hopefully see, the spirit of urgency and anticipation that we see in the Book of Revelation, is reflected in the writings of the Apostles just as much. In light of this preponderance of Scriptural evidence, I can only conclude that to suggest that Jesus' First Century followers did not need to know or understand, does not make sense to me at all. If they didn't really need to know and understand, as the Futurists claim, then Jesus would not have told them. Yet He most certainly did tell them, because He promised to return during their lifetimes, and I believe that He kept His word to them.

Before concluding this series, I would like to take a moment to address my Christian brethren who still embrace Futurism. My friends, first of all, I want you to know that I do not judge you or condemn you for your current beliefs. After all, it would be rather hypocritical for me to do so considering that I was likewise deceived by Futurism for forty years of my adult Christian life, until the Lord finally woke me up.

My goal in writing this series, as in everything that I have written over the years, is simply to share Scriptural truth as I have come to understand it. The truth is very important to me. I often pray that the Lord will not allow me to ever become deceived again, as I was for so many years. I also pray that He will continue to reveal more and more Biblical truth to me, as I continue to delve ever more deeply into His wonderful Word. As He does, it will continue to be my personal goal to share these truths with the world.

As a former Futurist myself, I know how you think. Some of the things you still believe today, I likewise believed for such a long time. I was completely convinced of them, and I fervently defended them and taught them. So I understand how deeply embedded such beliefs can become in a person's life, even if said beliefs are wrong. That is where the hard part enters the picture. It takes a lot of honesty and humility to be willing to admit to ourselves, to God, and likewise to our brethren, that we have been wrong, misguided, and a little off in our beliefs.

My friends, I have been down that road. After forty years of being a staunch Futurist, I had to admit that I had been

misled, and that I had become quite deceived. Not only was I personally deceived, but I was unknowingly and ignorantly deceiving others as well due to the things that I taught. It was of course not done with malicious intent. I was simply convinced of those things which I taught, just as you still are today. However, once God began to reveal things to me back in 2011-2012, I simply could not resist the truth of the Scriptures. Thus, since that time, I have worked hard to correct, update and rewrite those articles and series where I know that I have been in error.

So, I want you to understand that the things which I write regarding Futurism, aren't an attack against you personally. They are an exposé of the false doctrines themselves. Simply put, I want you to know the truth. I want to give you a big opportunity to escape the deception of Futurism. However, it must be by your own choice. I can show you the evidence, but you alone must decide whether or not you want to believe it. I have done my job. The ball is now in your court. What will you do? I pray you make the right choice.

With these thoughts, I will bring this article to a close. It is my hope that you've found it informative and enlightening, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life as well. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or with any other social network, I would really appreciate if you'd take the time to click or tap on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information and further study, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were either mentioned in this article, or which contain topics which are related to this article. All of these articles are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server. To read these articles, simply click or tap on any link you see below.

Abomination of Desolation: Explained!

Are You Flexible?

Fight Against Futurism

He That Shall Endure unto the End

Humility in Our Understanding of God's Word

In the Ages to Come

Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?

Modern Deception: Shall a Nation Be Born at Once?

Modern Deceptions: Return to Israel, the Fig Tree and This Generation

My Evolving Theology
Please Stop Misinterpreting the Scriptures
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Psalm 83 War False Doctrine Exposed!
Seventy Weeks Prophecy: What It Means
Sorry, Jesus Is Not Coming at Any Moment
The Day of the Lord: What It Really Means
The Great Tribulation and the Rapture
The Last Seven Years Chart
The Misguided End of the World Predictions of Harold Camping
The Triumphant Touchdown of Jesus Christ
The Two Sackcloth Witnesses of Revelation 11
The Woman in the Wilderness and the 144,000
Tradition or Truth? Old Wine or New Wine?
Understanding the Bible in Context
Vespasian, Titus and the Fall of Jerusalem
When Was Satan Cast Out of Heaven?
Who Hindered the Antichrist?
Who is Babylon the Great?
Who is Moshiach ben David?
Who is Who?: Defining Important Prophecy Terms

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