

A.3 MOTIVATION

The author of this thesis has maintained an avid interest in eschatology since coming to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and being baptized with the Holy Spirit in the mid-1970s, primarily through personal Bible study and the eschatological teachings and writings of Hal Lindsey (1970) and Colin H. Deal (*End Time News* Monthly Prophecy Newsletter has been updating Christendom on apocalyptic eschatological related events since the 1970's; He has also written several books (1979, 1981, and 1995) on apocalyptic eschatological issues). The interest in the Illuminati was generated from a fireside chat with Pat Brooks (1976), the Christian author and mother of one of the author's Coast Guard Academy classmates, in her living room during that same timeframe. The interest in the New Age Movement stemmed from the author's own mother's involvement in a certain facet of it. The major focus of this personal Bible study was fourfold and outlined as follows: 1) to determine, from a biblical perspective, if the current Church (Body of Christ) is in the "Fig Tree Generation" described by Jesus in the Olivet Discourse; 2) to gain the "increased knowledge" spoken of in Daniel 12:4; 3) to be able to discern the signs of the End-time/Last Days; and 4) to identify and expose Satan's deceptive, heretical doctrines and schemes in these Last Days.

The author's Masters thesis "The Rapture of the Church: A Doctrine of the Early Church or a Recent Development of the Dispensational Movement?" took the next step in that eschatological journey by incorporating extra-biblical sources, including the Early Church Fathers' writings, to answer a pressing eschatological question on the orthodoxy of the Rapture of the Church. After that, the next step in this continuing eschatological journey was to pick up where the conclusion of the Masters thesis left off:

In the late summer of 2004, Oral Roberts received an eschatological vision from God. In this vision, he was shown that neither the Church, nor the world is ready for the Second

Coming of the Lord Jesus. The Second Coming would be separated into two parts—the Rapture of the Church in the clouds (before the Antichrist and the Tribulation), and the return of the Lord Jesus the second time to earth to judge the nations (at Armageddon). *The Church has not been fully doing its job by proclaiming the Second Coming, in conjunction with preaching the Gospel of the Lord Jesus* (Roberts 2004:2). *This concept of preaching and teaching both Comings (advents) of the Lord Jesus as part of the Gospel appears to be implied in the Great Commission, “and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt 28:20). The Apostles and the early church Fathers did in fact preach and teach the Gospel in this manner (boldly declaring both Jesus’ First and Second Comings) and many of them were martyred for doing it [emphasis added]* (Hebert 2006c:102-3).

In addition to the continuation of the Masters thesis, this next step into the doctoral realm took a bit broader view of the eschatological landscape by incorporating and amplifying seven Masters’ papers regarding Justin Martyr’s eschatological views, Premillennialism, an Eschatological view of the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matt 25:31-46), Eschatological Christology, John Wesley’s Eschatology, and two separate papers on the Illuminati (Hebert 2004a, 2004b, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2006a, and 2006b). To this foundation, additional research was added in the areas of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of darkness, orthodoxy versus heresy, signs of the times, and a historical look at the Church’s views of the Eschatological Gospel. In the process of researching this topic, the author searched for any theses or dissertations that were germane to the subject at hand. Only one, completed by C. Raymond Holmes (1972), could be found that was directly applicable. Additionally, Herschel Hobbs’ article “The Gospel of the Blessed Hope” (1957) is directly on point but very brief; George Eldon Ladd’s textbook *A Theology of the New Testament* (1974) in part addresses the “Eschatological Kerygma”; and J. Christiaan Beker’s book *Paul’s Apocalyptic Gospel: The Coming Triumph of God* (1982) addresses the thesis subject, but only from the Apostle Paul’s perspective.

Therefore, using the work of Hobbs (1957), Holmes (1972), Ladd (1974), and Beker (1982) as a starting point, this thesis will be built upon all previous research and bibliographical information, continue where the Master's thesis left off, and forge ahead into new territory. This study should hopefully encourage the twenty-first century Church to fight against the insidiously deceptive schemes of Satan in these Last Days by teaching an Eschatological Gospel of Both Comings of Jesus to the Body of Christ and to a lost and dying world.