

A.4 METHODOLOGY

The author believes in a plenary view of Scripture in general (2 Tim 3:16, “All Scripture is God-breathed . . .”) and of prophecy specifically (2 Pet 1:19-21, “. . . no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God”), with a historical-grammatical-literal hermeneutic and a premillennial-futurist, pretribulational Rapture perspective of eschatology. This translates to the literal view (versus the allegorical view) of interpretation of biblical prophecy. This includes interpreting Scripture literally, historically, grammatically, contextually, authorially, and exegetically, while still allowing for the use of parables, metaphors, figures of speech, poetry, and symbols to bring meaning to the text (Geisler 2005:415-17, 451).

Prophecy may be divided into two categories: “forthtelling,” God’s message for the present or near future situation; and “foretelling,” God’s message for the future (Klein, Blomberg and Robert Hubbard 1993:359, 370-78; LaSor, David Hubbard and Bush 1996:229-30). Additionally, foretelling may be further divided into the following two categories: prophecy, concerned with “this-world” events; and apocalyptic, concerned with “other-world” events relating to cosmic, final solutions (Stein 2004:89; Klein, Blomberg and Robert Hubbard 1993:384-5; LaSor, David Hubbard and Bush 1996:569-70). The two primary examples of biblical apocalyptic prophecy are the Books of Daniel and Revelation, as well as major portions of Ezekiel, Zechariah and portions of Isaiah (Fee and Stuart 2003:251). Additionally, there remains Jesus’ Apocalyptic Discourse recorded by Matthew, Mark and Luke and various eschatological teachings of Paul, contained in his Epistles in the New Testament. According to William W. Klein, Craig L Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., the following five general characteristics must also be understood about biblical prophecy: 1) Old Testament prophets

understood history in two main periods, “*the present age and the age to come*”; 2) Old Testament prophets have a “telescopic view of the future”; 3) Old Testament prophecy may have “two fulfillments, one near the prophet’s lifetime,” and another in the far distant future; 4) New Testament teaching focuses prophecy on *both comings of the Lord Jesus Christ*; and 5) Some prophecies “are conditional, not absolute” and based on God’s sovereignty and the relationship between God and His people [emphasis added] (1993:375-7).

Scriptures in the Old Testament prophesy about an Eschatological Gospel of the kingdom of heaven/God involving two comings of the Messiah. John the Baptist and angels of the Lord confirm that Jesus Christ was the one sent by God as fulfillment of those prophecies (*Yeshua HaMashiach*). Jesus Himself teaches and preaches about this eschatological kingdom and that He is the “author and finisher” (Heb 12:2) and “Alpha and Omega, the first and the last” (Rev 1:8, 11; 22:13) of this Eschatological Gospel faith. Jesus confirms this in the Lord’s Prayer, Words of Institution, the Great Commission, and in the Revelation of Himself given to John. Jesus’ Apostles Peter, Paul, the writer of Hebrews, James, Jude, and John also confirm and teach the Eschatological Gospel as doctrine to the newly born Body of Christ (Church) in the New Testament. The Eschatological Gospel may also be seen through the Church’s observance of the Ordinances/Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, and in carrying out the Great Commission through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

Another presupposition of the author’s is that the Church Fathers, up to and including the First Ecumenical Council at Nicea in AD 325, were almost exclusively premillennialist in their view of eschatology. Their premillennial perspective did not begin to change until the time of Origen and his allegorical interpretation of Scripture in the late third century, and did not fully change until Augustine’s amillennial doctrine became the orthodox view of the Church in the

early fifth century (King 2002:1, 8-10; Van Hoogen 2002:120-3). Additional presuppositions are based on the following definitions of terms: systematic theology, orthodoxy and heresy; Eschatological Gospel; time, and *chronos* time versus *kairos* time; biblical time; salvation history; the kingdom of heaven/God; premillennialism; *parousia*/Second Coming; rapture; dispensationalism; day of the Lord (*Yahweh*); and Satan/the Devil and his kingdom of darkness.

The practical methodology that will be used in this thesis will take the form of introduction to conclusion, using primarily a systematic-historical-progressive approach and a Harvard reference format. In general terms, it will start with defining the Eschatological Gospel and related terms. Next, there will be a brief study of Eschatological Gospel scriptures. Then, a brief review will be made of the historical foundation throughout the Church Age of the Eschatological Gospel. This review will culminate in the twentieth century Church era with the founding of several churches and evangelical ministries upon the Eschatological Gospel and the eventual decline in teaching of the doctrine, which has become more and more apparent over the last twenty years or so. Next, and in keeping with the focus of the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares/Weeds coexisting (unhindered by each other), a review of the history of Satan's development of false religions and heresies will be undertaken, culminating with the exponential increase in activity since the rebirth of Israel in 1948. Finally, this thesis will conclude with a historical-eschatological chronology, a treatment of the signs of the times in these Last Days, and the accompanying necessity for teaching and preaching the Eschatological Gospel of Both Comings of the Lord Jesus Christ in the twenty-first century, especially as the Body of Christ sees the day of His *Parousia* rapidly approaching.