

## Warner's "The Abrahamic Covenant" Closing Argument

By Norm Fields (03/30/09)

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### Introduction

With this closing argument the first round of this debate on "Premillennialism (Chiliasm) vs. Amillennialism" draws to a close. In this first round it has been the burden of my opponent to establish his position, "Premillennialism (Chiliasm)," from Scripture. Mr. Warner presented a proposition statement that he was to affirm and I was to deny. He was to present positive argumentation to the validity of his position and it has been my responsibility to present the negative argument to that position. Therefore, with the submission of this closing argument the reader should be able to discern if Warner's view has been established from Scripture.

In my response to Warner's opening argument I presented my opponent with several questions regarding the view he espouses. In this closing argument I will show that Mr. Warner did not answer those questions in harmony with the word of God. I will also show where Warner has stated clear contradictions to biblical statements. If the reader places a greater weight of influence on any argument presented in this debate, let it be this - *any doctrinal position that requires Scriptural contradictions cannot be the true doctrine of Christ*. It is clear that Warner's view *requires* him to contradict holy writ.

Warner directed several charges at me in his response and, while the reader may expect me to answer every one, answering such charges is not my task in this first round of the debate. The task of defending a positively stated position belongs to my opponent. In the next round of the debate I will present a positive proposition in antithesis to that of my opponent. It will be at that time that Mr. Warner can level whatever charges he sees fit against my position and I will be obligated to give an answer.

Warner seems to think that if he can show that I am wrong about anything, which he hasn't, then that will somehow prove him true. However, it would only prove that I am wrong about something, not that his proposition is right! Warner must prove that his proposition is true from Scriptural evidence. In his second paper he presented no further positive argumentation, rather he switched to the negative in his analysis of my response to his opening argument. In doing so he has failed to positively and conclusively present his view.

### Questions presented to Warner

In my first rebuttal to Warner's "The Abrahamic Covenant," I posed the following questions:

1. Is Jesus now reigning over his kingdom or will he begin to reign when he comes again?
2. Is Christ currently the King of kings and Lord of lords or is he coming to take his place as such?
3. Does "the throne of David" refer to the literal, physical, throne on which David literally sat in the literal, physical, city of Jerusalem or is it used symbolically in reference to the place of sovereign authority over God's people?
4. What degree of authority do you believe the early "Christian" writers possessed?
5. Why would the Old Testament prophets be prophesying the second coming of Christ, or things relating to it, when they were still looking forward to his first coming?

These questions were very purposefully given. One who holds to the doctrine of Premillennialism **cannot** answer these questions while being true to both their doctrine and the Bible. The point of the questions was to see if Warner would answer them in harmony with Scripture, and thus contradict his Premillennialist doctrine, or, would he answer them in harmony with his doctrine, and thus contradict the Bible. Sadly, he did the latter.

### Warner - Christ is/is not reigning over his kingdom now.

Is that confusing? Such is Mr. Warner's answer to the question as to whether or not Christ is now reigning over his kingdom. He says that yes he is reigning over his kingdom now but no he is not now reigning over his kingdom. Well, Mr. Warner, he either is or he is not now reigning! Which is it? It cannot be both.

Mr. Warner says that Christ *is* now reigning over his kingdom in that he is reigning over the church. But, he *is not* now reigning over his kingdom in that he is not now reigning over a universal earthly kingdom. So, according to Warner, he is but he is not.

When Warner tries to explain how Christ can be both now reigning and not now reigning he exposes how his position forces him into a blatant contradiction with Scripture. He says that Christ is now reigning over his church *but* the church "is limited in its scope," so he is "not yet reigning over the nations." This contradicts clear biblical statements on two counts.

## Contradiction #1 - The Church Is Limited

*Eph 3:10-12, To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known **by the church** the manifold wisdom of God, According to **the eternal purpose** which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.*

Notice, Warner says the church is limited but Paul says the church is according to God's eternal purpose. The church was purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord! It is in the church that both Jew and Gentile are brought together in one body. It is in the church that Christ places the saved of every nation.

*Acts 2:47, And the Lord added **to the church** daily those who were being saved (NKJV).*

Therefore, it was according to God's eternal purpose for Christ to purchase the church with his own blood. Notice the following passages:

*1 Peter 1:18-20, Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not **redeemed** with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was **foreordained before the foundation of the world**, but was manifest in these last times for you,*

*Titus 1:2, In hope of **eternal life**, which God, that cannot lie, **promised before the world began**;*

*Eph 1:4, According as he hath chosen **us** in him **before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

It is clear that God had planned for man's salvation through the death of his Son from the foundation of the world, that is, from eternity. He was foreordained to be our sacrificial lamb from eternity. The hope of eternal life was in him before the world began. Before the foundation of the world God chose the church to be the body of his saved people.

The Bible says that the blood of Christ was shed to purchase the church!

*Acts 20:28, Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy [Spirit] hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, **which he hath purchased with his own blood.***

Evidently, according to Warner, the blood of Christ was limited in its power to accomplish the eternal purpose of God. Warner does not say that the supposed future earthly kingdom is limited. No, it is the church - says he - that is limited. However, the

Bible explicitly states that the blood of Christ purchased the church! Nowhere do we read of the blood of Christ being shed to establish some future earthly kingdom.

By his own admission and in defense of a man-made false doctrine Warner has put himself in the sorrowful state of denouncing the very blood of Christ! If the church is limited then so to is the blood of Christ. If the church is limited then so to is salvation, for salvation is in the church.

*Acts 2:47, ...And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.*

Rom. 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were *baptized into Jesus Christ* were baptized into his death?

1Cor. 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all *baptized into one body*, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

2Tim. 2:10 Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain *the salvation which is in Christ* Jesus with eternal glory.

Eph. 1:22-23 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to *the church, which is his body*, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Warner says the church is limited but the Bible says that the saved are in the church, which is the body of Christ! Warner says the Christian's hope is in a future earthly kingdom but the Bible says that Jew and Gentile are made one in the church. Warner cannot provide a single verse for his supposed "limited scope" of the church!

### **Contradiction #2 - Christ Is Not Now Reigning Over The Nations.**

Again, Warner finds himself in the very terrifying position of contradicting Scripture when he says that Christ is not now reigning over the nations. According to Mr. Warner, Christ is neither reigning over the nations nor is God's will being done on earth as it is heaven.

The Bible clearly states that Christ's rule over the nations would be brought about in the church. Isaiah, prophesying the establishment of the church, says "*all nations shall flow into it*" (Isaiah 2:2). If it be questioned as to whether or not Isaiah is speaking of the church, a simple parallel will settle that question.

## Isaiah 2:2-4

“And it shall come to pass *in the last days*,

that the mountain of *the LORD's house* shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills;

and *all nations shall flow unto it*. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to *the house of the God of Jacob*; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths:

for *out of Zion shall go forth the law*, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And *he shall judge among the nations*, and shall rebuke many people:

and they shall beat their *swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks*: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, *neither shall they learn war any more.*”

Psalm 2 is a powerful statement to Christ's rule over the nations in his church. But Warner says, “no, no, Christ is not yet ruling the nations.” So the reader will need to choose who is right, Mr. Warner or Scripture.

Notice:

## The church

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 (Heb. 1:2).

But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in *the house of God, which is the church* of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15).

And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, *out of every nation under heaven* ... Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.(Acts 2:5, 41).

And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name *among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem* (Luke 24:47).

For *the weapons of our warfare are not carnal*, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds (2 Cor. 9:27).

Psalm 2:6-9

“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 [nations] 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.”

Inspired Application

“And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, *God hath fulfilled* the same unto us their children, in that he hath *raised up Jesus again;* as it is also written in the second psalm, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*”

(Acts 13:32-33)

God’s will is being done on earth in the church. But, again, Mr. Warner says that doesn’t count. Let the Bible decide the matter!

*Matt 16:18-19, And, I say to you, that you are Peter, but upon this foundation-rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give to you the keys of heaven’s kingdom. What you bind on the earth will have been bound in heaven, and what you release on the earth will have been released in heaven.*

I’m sure that my opponent is very well aware that, unlike most mainstream translations, the above translation is accurate to the Greek text. When the apostles began preaching the unsearchable wisdom of God (1 Cor. 2:7) they were binding and loosing the will of God on earth. Apparently, Mr. Warner thinks it’s all or none. If everyone is not doing the will of God then it must be that no one is!

If the will of God is not being done on earth today then should we count Romans 12:2 as uninspired error? Certainly not! For it is in the church that we *“may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”* Is Mr. Warner unaware that there are multitudes in every nation under heaven *“doing the will of God from the heart”* (Eph. 6:6). Perhaps Warner would rebuke us for praying, as Paul prayed, that brethren *“may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God”* (Col. 4:12). Apparently Warner’s counsel is to not bother living *“to the will of God”* (1 Pet. 4:2), because such living will not occur until his mythical future kingdom is established.

***Any doctrine that requires one to be in contradiction to the Bible cannot be true biblical doctrine!***

**Warner - Christ Is Not Currently Lord of Lords and King of Kings**

Actually, his exact words were, “Jesus is not ‘King of kings’ yet ... He is not ‘Lord of lords’ yet.” Here is his “all or nothing” reasoning again. Apparently, Mr. Warner

believes that God only has authority over, or is the ruler of, those who willingly submit to his rule. When people rebel against the government does that mean that the government does not have the rule, or authority, over those people? Of course not! Just because some are disobedient to Christ doesn't mean that Christ is not the one with the authority to be their ruler. That places the authority of rulership in those under that rule, not in the ruler himself.

According to Mr. Warner, the only way Christ could be "King of kings and Lord of lords" would be for every king and lord to *allow him to be!* Christ does not need man's approval to be "King of kings and Lord of lords." He said, "*All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth*" (Matt. 28:18). But, according to Warner, it is not God the Father who could give Christ that ruling authority, rather, it must be granted him by men. Who can believe it!

The term "King of kings and Lord of lords" is a reference to the supreme authority of Christ. That authority does not rely, in any way, on whether anyone submits to Christ or not. He is the supreme ruler of all mankind, period. Notice how the term is used throughout the Bible:

- In Ezra 7:12 it is Artaxerxes that is referred to as "king of kings." So, according to Warner, Artaxerxes was either ruling over *every other king in the world* or he was not actually "king of kings." The term is simply in reference to the power Artaxerxes represented as the king of the world's super power at that time.
- In Ezekiel 26:7 it is the king of Babylon who is referred to as "a king of kings." Again, referring to Nebuchadnezzar as being the head of the world's superpower at that time. It does not mean that *every other king in the world* was in subjection to his rule.
- In Daniel 2:37 the king of Babylon is again called "a king of kings." In giving the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel makes it clear that he is talking about powerful nations. So, again, Nebuchadnezzar being "a king of kings" was in no way dependent on *every other king in the world* being in subjection to him. It refers to the authority and power he possessed as king of Babylon, very likely the most powerful king in the world at that time.
- Paul very clearly refers to Christ as "King of kings, and Lord of lords" in 1 Timothy 6:12. Warner will say this refers to what Christ *will be* at his second coming. However, the English translation of the present tense, "*who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords," is correct for such is the tense of the Greek. The literal translation of the term would be more like "king of those *who are ruling*, and lord of those *who are ruling*." The words

“kings” and “lords” translate the *present participles* of the verbs “to rule” and “to exercise lordship.” So Paul says that Christ was *at that time* a more powerful king, a lord of greater authority, than those who were *at that time* ruling as kings and exercising lordship. Will Mr. Warner say that Paul was wrong or will he admit that he has contradicted Scripture?

- Again, in Revelation 17:14 that text explicitly states that “*he is* Lord of lords, and King of kings.” It matters not at all how Mr. Warner interprets this passage or to what event he applies it. The fact remains that *at the time it was written* John said that Christ was *at that time* King of kings and Lord of lords. He said *he is* presently, not *he will be* at some time in the future. The point is that Christ, and Christians, have the victory over every enemy of Christ because he is the most powerful, the greatest and mightiest, of all the kings and lords that have ever been or that will ever be.

Mr. Warner says that Christ is “not yet” King of kings and Lord of lords. The Bible says he is now King of kings and Lord of lords. *No doctrine that requires contradiction with the Bible can be true biblical doctrine!*

### **Warner - Christ Is Not Now Sitting On The Throne Of David Ruling God’s People**

According to Premillennialist doctrine, which Warner defends, Christ must return to earth to sit on David’s literal physical throne in literal, physical, Jerusalem. However, this is a contradiction to what the inspired New Testament writers clearly stated on the matter.

- Peter said that Christ was raised from the dead to sit on David’s throne.

*Acts 2:29-33, Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before **spake of the resurrection of Christ**, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and **having received of the Father the promise of the Holy [Spirit]**, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.*

- When the apostles saw Jesus taken up, he left their site in the clouds.

*Acts 1:9, And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a **cloud received him out of their sight.***



- The prophet Daniel was blessed with a vision of what happened on the other side of those clouds. Where the apostles lost sight of Christ in the clouds, Daniel's vision begins with Christ coming on the clouds.

*Dan 7:13-14, I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.*

- When we put these passages together we get the following chain of events:
  1. Christ ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9).
  2. When he ascended into heaven he was brought before God and received his kingdom (Daniel 7:13-14).
  3. The apostles said, having been raised up, he had received his kingdom and was ruling on the throne of David over God's people (Acts 2:29-33).
  4. People were added to the church (the kingdom) through obedience to the gospel of Christ (the King) (Acts 2:41-47). Acts 2:47 is the first time the church is spoken of as being in existence. After Acts chapter 2 there is no further reference to the kingdom of God being "at hand." It was no longer "at hand," rather, it was *in hand*, it was present in the church.

Note also the parallel between the terms "throne of David" and "throne of the Lord." Again, the throne of David was symbolic for the authorized ruler over God's people and, thus, the throne of David was the throne of the Lord in that it rested on God's authority.

1 Kings 2:12, Then *sat Solomon upon the throne of David* his father; and his kingdom was established greatly.

1 Chron 29:23, Then *Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord* as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him.

If Christ is sitting and reigning over God's people now, at the right hand of God, then he is sitting on his throne. It is the Lord's throne! It is the throne of his father David as that throne represented the rulership over God's people.

Warner says that the throne must be in Jerusalem. The Bible says it is!

*Rev 3:12, Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city*

*of my God, which is **new Jerusalem**, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.*

*Rev 21:2, And I John saw the holy city, **new Jerusalem**, coming down from God out of heaven, **prepared as a bride** adorned for her husband.*

New Jerusalem is the church! Christ sits on the throne of rule over the church now at the right hand of God in heaven.

Warner says that the throne will be over Israel. The Bible says it is!

*Gal 6:16, And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon **the Israel of God**.*

*Rom 2:28-29, For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But **he is a Jew, which is one inwardly**; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*

As Israel, the Jews, were God's chosen people in time past, Christians are his chosen people now. Christ sits on the throne of David as the ruler of God's people now at the right hand of God in heaven!

Mr. Warner says that Christ is not now reigning from the throne of David, the Bible says he is. ***No doctrine that requires contradiction with the Bible is true biblical doctrine!***

### **Warner - The Writings Of The Early Christian Writers Are In Agreement With Me**

Where is the contradiction with biblical teaching here? It is in this statement made by Warner, "The men being quoted were 'approved,' having been given the responsibility of leadership in various churches founded by the Apostles, and having been considered faithful witnesses to the oral teaching of the Apostles." Again, this contradicts biblical teaching on two points.

#### **Contradiction #1 - Leadership Equals Faithfulness**

It is very interesting that Mr. Warner places his confidence in these early writers based on the fact that they were elders and leaders in various congregations. It seems to me, from biblical teaching, that their being in such positions of authority would cause Warner to give what they wrote an even greater critical examination rather than just accepting it on the basis of their position in the church. Paul explicitly stated that the apostasy, which would follow the apostles' deaths, would come from among those in these very positions of authority!

*Acts 20:29-30, For I know this, that **after my departing** shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also **of your own selves [the elders]** shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*

Where in the Bible does it ever say that those in these roles of leadership have some special authority over sound doctrine? The elders are to function within the realm of biblical authority but they have no authority whatsoever to determine what is and is not sound doctrine. We are to base our faith and practice on the word of God alone. Which brings us to the second contradiction in the statement.

### **Contradiction #2 - Oral Tradition Is Authoritative**

Apparently, Warner believes that these early Christian writers had some special insight into biblical doctrine because, he says, they were “faithful witnesses to the *oral teachings* of the Apostles.” The indication seems to be that the writings of these early Christians carry Apostolic authority, not from what the Apostles wrote, but from what they taught *orally!* However, we are commanded to not go beyond what is *written*. The Catholic church places authority on *oral tradition* to justify their departures from Scripture. I pray that Mr. Warner is not engaging in the same error.

*John 20:30-31, And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But **these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.***

*1 Cor 4:6, And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us **not to think [beyond] that which is written,** that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.*

*1 John 5:13, These things **have I written** unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; **that ye may know** that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

There is certainly nothing about any authoritative *oral teaching* of the Apostles, pertaining to sound doctrine, that we need to be seeking out from the early Christian writers. We have everything we need to be the faithful people of God in faith and practice *in the written word!*

Warner has insisted that the early Christian writers “provide strong uniform evidence that our view [chiliasm] is historic.” He lists “Papias, Barnabas, Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Lactantius).” He doesn’t even include Cerinthus in his list, who Eusebius accused of being the first to bring this doctrine into the church.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mattox, F.W., Ph. D. “The Eternal Kingdom.” 1961. Gospel Light. Delight, Arkansas. Pg. 116

According to Schaff, "His views ... assign him a position between Judaism and Gnosticism proper. He rejected all the Gospels except a mutilated Matthew, taught the validity of the Mosaic law and the millennial kingdom."<sup>2</sup> I can see why Premillennialist try so hard to raise doubt over Eusebius' claim that he is the founder of their cardinal doctrine! Warner has made the claim that the amillennial view is the result of Gnosticism. Keep that in mind as we continue to look at the beliefs of those who Mr. Warner claims to be in agreement with. Cerinthus was a Gnostic and likely the one who first began espousing the view of a millennial kingdom in the church.

Schaff, arguably one of the most respected authorities in the field of Church History, says that "chiliasm rested on a carnal misapprehension of the Messianic kingdom, a literal interpretation of prophetic figures, and an overestimate of the importance of the Jewish people and the holy city as the centre of that kingdom. It was developed shortly before and after Christ in the apocalyptic literature, as the Book of Enoch, the Apocalyps of Baruch, 4<sup>th</sup> Esdras, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, and the Sibylline Books. It was adopted by the heretical sect of Ebionites, and the Gnostic Cerinthus."<sup>3</sup> Where do you find the roots of Premillennialism? Firmly planted *in the books rejected* by both Jews and Christians as inspired writings!

Papias is mentioned, and it is strange that Warner would want his views associated with this man. Warner does not believe that Christians will be going to heaven when this present world comes to an end, Papias clearly did. Hear him for yourself, "As the presbyters say, then *those who are deemed worthy of an abode in heaven shall go there*, others shall enjoy the delights of Paradise, and others shall possess the splendour of the city; for everywhere the Saviour will be seen, according as they shall be worthy who see Him. But that there is this distinction between the habitation of those who produce an hundred-fold, and that of those who produce sixty-fold, and that of those who produce thirty-fold; *for the first will be taken up into the heavens*, the second class will dwell in Paradise, and the last will inhabit the city; and that on this account the Lord said, 'In my Father's house are many mansions.'"<sup>4</sup> Clearly, Papias believed in three separate and distinct eternal destinies for the faithful: 1) heaven; 2) Paradise, and; 3) the city. It is "the city" that is taken as a reference to those who will live on earth. It sounds a lot like the belief of Jehovah's Witnesses! There is your early source for your view Mr. Warner.

Barnabas is mentioned. This reference to a Premillennialistic Barnabas should not be applied to the faithful missionary of Scripture. It is a reference to "The Epistle of

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<sup>2</sup> Schaff, Philip. "History Of The Christian Church" Vol. 2. Scribner. New York. 1858. 2:11:123.

<sup>3</sup> Schaff. 2:12:158

<sup>4</sup> The Fragments of Papias 4:14-16

Barnabas,” most likely written early second century. The letter, written anonymously, was most likely attributed to Barnabas by those desiring to give it some Apostolic authority. Here, again, is a source for Warner’s view that contradicts his charge of amillennialists being Gnostic and allegorical in their views. How strange then that he would site a reference that engages in extreme allegory with the days of Creation in teaching chiliasm. Notice, “The Sabbath is mentioned at the beginning of the creation: ‘And God made in six days the works of His hands, and made an end on the seventh day, and rested on it, and sanctified it.’ Attend, my children, to *the meaning of this* expression, ‘He finished in six days.’ This implieth that the Lord will finish all things in six thousand years, for a day is with Him a thousand years. And He Himself testifieth, saying, ‘Behold, to-day will be a thousand years.’ Therefore, my children, in six days, that is six thousand years, all things will be finished. ‘And He rested on the seventh day.’ *This meaneth*: when His Son, coming again, shall destroy the time of the wicked man, and judge the ungodly, and change the sun, and the moon, and the stars, then shall He truly rest on the seventh day.”<sup>5</sup> Is it any wonder that this letter was rejected as inspired writing? Where is the Scriptural justification for such allegory? Yet, Warner sites the Epistle of Barnabas as a historical reference for chiliasm and in the same breath accuses any who reject it as “allegorizing.”

Justin Martyr is also no friend to Mr. Warner’s argument, i.e. chiliasm was the “uniform” belief of the early Christians. Justin explicitly states that the expectation of the earthly kingdom of Christ was not shared by many pure and devout Christians of his day. Warner would have us believe it was the prevalent view of the day and such is not at all the case.<sup>6</sup>

Irenaeus is also an example that Premillennialism was not the “uniform” belief of early Christians. Without a doubt, Irenaeus was a Premillennialist but he never attributes his views to Polycarp, of whom he was supposedly a disciple. Rather, it has been observed that Irenaeus’ views were influenced by Papias, not Polycarp. If the doctrine was so universally believed then why doesn’t Irenaeus refer to his teacher as being of the view? Reading Polycarp will find no trace of Premillennialist doctrine!

The fact is that there is no inspired source for the Premillennialist doctrine. Rather, they must find their doctrine in the writings of uninspired sources. Those sources are Gnostic and allegorical to the extreme. Those sources have been rejected as inspired text by Christians from the time of the first century church. They reveal not true doctrine but the Judaistic hope of an earthly Messiah. Let Warner place his hope in such sources, I will place mine in the inspired writings of Scripture given by the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>5</sup> The Epistle of Barnabas chapter 15

<sup>6</sup> Schaff. 2:12:158

The only Scripture Warner can cite that even mentions a thousand year reign is in Revelation 20. He says that, as a Premillennialist, he takes this thousand years as being literal. However, if it is to be taken literally here, in the the most figurative and symbolic book in the entire Bible, then it would be the only place in Scripture where it is used literally. Every other time the term “thousand years” is used it is used figuratively. Other than the six occurrences in Revelation 20, it is only used four times in the whole Bible. Every use is figurative.

*Ps 90:4, For a **thousand years** in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.*

*Eccl 6:6, Yea, though he live a **thousand years** twice told, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place?*

*2 Peter 3:8, But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a **thousand years**, and a **thousand years** as one day.*

The number, one thousand, is used symbolically to refer to the whole of a thing. For example, in Psalm 50:10 it says that “every beast of the forest” belongs to God and “the cattle upon a thousand hills.” So, does that mean that all the beasts of the forest are his but only the cattle on a thousand hills? Of course not! It means that every creature of the earth belongs to God, they are his. Likewise, the one thousand years of Revelation 20 refers to the whole period of time for the church age.

***Any doctrine that contradicts Scripture cannot be true biblical doctrine!***

### **Warner - The Prophets Spoke Of Both The First And Second Coming Of Christ**

My opponent claims that passages such as 1 Peter 1:10-12; Matthew 24:29-31 and 1 Corinthians 15:53-54 are evidence that Old Testament prophets spoke of Christ’s second coming as well as his first.

*1 Peter 1:10-12, Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, **who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when [He] testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.***

Mr. Warner says that “the glory that should follow” refers to the second coming. But in the text it is clear that Peter is referring to the prophets looking forward to the *salvation* that Christ’s death would make available. Christ is not returning to save people, rather he is returning for the people who are saved. He came the first time and died for the

sins of man in order to provide a means of salvation, which is the glory that followed his death (cf. Heb. 12:1, 2).

*Heb 12:1-2, Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; **who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.***

By his use of Matthew 24:29-31 Mr. Warner falls into the same error of the Dispensationalist. Jesus is answering two questions in that chapter. He had just been asked when the Temple would be destroyed and when he would come again (Matt. 24:1-3). My opponent, and Dispensationalist, have Jesus completely ignoring the first question, when will the Temple be destroyed?, and only answer the second, when will he come again? Jesus answered both questions in order by first talking about the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (Matt. 24:4-35) and then telling them that only the Father knows the answer to the second question of when his second coming would be (Matt. 24:36-44). So the prophecy of Daniel referred to in this chapter (Matt. 24:15; Dan. 9:27; 12:11) is a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, not the second coming of Christ. Mr. Warner extracts a portion of Jesus' answer to the first question and applies it to his second coming. He also takes a prophecy of Daniel not referred to in the chapter and that does not apply to the chapter and ignores the reference to Daniel made by Jesus himself. In other words, he is using the passage out of context and twisting the Scripture to say something it does not say.

His attempt to show Old Testament prophecy of the second coming continues with 1 Corinthians 15:53-54. However, here again, he goes too far with his application of the original prophecy to the second coming of Christ. Most certainly Paul is talking about the resurrection of the dead that will occur when Christ comes again, and in so doing uses a phrase first spoken by Isaiah in Isaiah 25:8. However, it cannot be said that Isaiah was looking forward to second coming of Christ in his prophesying the escape from death that would be made available by the first coming of Christ to die in our place. Here again is an Old Testament prophet looking forward to Christ and his kingdom to come and the great blessing to mankind he would bring.

Mr. Warner makes parallels between Isaiah 25:8 and Revelation 7:17, supposing that passage to be in reference to the millennial kingdom after Christ's second coming. However Revelation 7:17 is so filled with language referring to the church that there can be no doubt as to that which the symbolic passage has reference.

Rev 7:13-17

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 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.*

15 Therefore *are they before the throne of God*, and *serve him day and night in his temple*: and *he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.*

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne *shall feed them*, and *shall lead them unto living fountains of waters*: and *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*

Notice also that in Revelation 21:4, speaking of the church, John says "there shall be no more death." It is in the church that there is no fear of death. (Heb. 2:14, 15). It is in the church that death has lost its sting (1 Corinthians 15:55-57). And it was the church that was spoken of by Isaiah!

Jesus himself said that his first coming was the fulfillment of all that the prophets had spoken concerning him and his kingdom (Luke 24:44). Peter said that everything the prophets had spoken of Christ and his kingdom was fulfilled by his first coming (Acts 3:18, 24; 1 Peter 1:10-12). However, Mr. Warner says the prophets were looking forward to the second coming of Christ. *Any doctrine that requires contradiction with the Bible cannot be the true doctrine of Christ.*

Those baptized into Christ for the washing away of their sins (Acts 22:16; Rev. 1:5).

"Come boldly to the throne of grace" (Heb 4:16).

"Ye are the temple of the living God" (2 Cor 6:16).

Christ dwells among his brethren in the church (Heb. 2:12; Jn. 15:4, 5).

Christ is the bread of life and he provides the living water to his disciples in the church (Jn. 6:35; 4:14).

God will wipe away all tears in the New Jerusalem, which is the bride of Christ - the church (Rev. 21:2-4).



## **Conclusion**

We pray that the reader will find this discussion beneficial in ascertaining the truth of God's word. We also pray that Mr. Warner will see the inconsistencies, contradictions and unscriptural nature of his currently held view of the Christian's hope.

Christ himself said that we must be prepared now for his coming "for ye know not what hour the Lord doth come" (Matt. 24:42). We must prepare ourselves now by giving obedience to the gospel of Christ (2 Thess. 1:8; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). We will not have a second chance in some mythical earthly kingdom to be established at some point in the future. God's kingdom is on earth now! It is a spiritual kingdom, not a physical. The Lord adds those to his kingdom (his church) who hear his word (Rom. 10:17), believe what it teaches about him and his kingdom (Jn. 8:24; Acts 8:12), repent of a sinful lifestyle (Acts 2:38; 17:30), confess faith in the deity of Christ (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:10), and are baptized into him for the remission of their sins (Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:3, 4; Gal. 3:26, 27). Living faithful unto death (Col. 1:23; Rev. 2:10) secures the hope of an eternal home in heaven (Jn. 14:1-3; Matt. 25:46; 2 Cor. 5:1, 8; 1 Pet. 1:4, 5).

In the next round of this discussion I will be presenting the positive argument for the Christian's true hope, the resurrection unto life and an eternal home in heaven with God. It will be my opponent's task to disprove that notion by showing how it is contrary to true biblical teaching. It will be the readers task to carefully examine all of the evidence in light of inspired Scripture and resolve to "hold fast" only that which is found to be in harmony therewith.