

Debate Closing Statement

By Tim Warner (05/17/09)

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Since Norm Fields has informed me that he will not be continuing the debate after this round, this will be the last submission. I want to thank him for a lively discussion. While I am convinced he is wrong regarding this very important topic, I pass no judgment on his soul. None of us can claim to be completely error free. We are all a work in progress. And I am glad we have a gracious God, who looks on the motives of the heart.

My goal in debates is to challenge and be challenged, so that the truth will prevail in the end. That is far more important than anyone's ego or reputation. The major complaint I raised in my previous paper was that Fields repeatedly failed to adequately address important points I raised. I am glad he at least made an attempt in his last paper, although it seems to have fizzled out after about half way through my points.

The pursuit of truth demands that we use intellectually honest methods. The quest involves critical examination of methods and presuppositions on both sides. Since all humans tend to be blind to our own weaknesses, debates like this help clear away some of the fog, and expose errors.

I have been openly critical of my opponent's methods of handling Scripture, and his last paper is no exception. I stated early in this debate that methodology will be the deciding factor. And I believe that prediction has proven true. My method is really very simple. Interpret revelation progressively, line upon line, precept upon precept, in the order it was given historically, harmonizing each new revelation with past revelation.

I have tried to honestly address every point my opponent raised, and his supporting Scriptures, pointing out where I believe he has made exegetical errors, and errors in logic. I have sought to harmonize any passage he has raised with my view, without doing any violence to the context or grammar.

My opponent has demonstrated a totally different approach. In many cases, instead of pointing out exegetical errors on my part, he would offer another passage to counter the

passage I raised, often without any attempt to deal with the original passage and find harmony between them. It should be obvious that pitting one Scripture against another does not result in truth, but contradiction. It does not solve the difficulty for his view unless he can show how I have misunderstood the original passage.

In my last paper, I repeatedly turned Field's own litmus test against him, "*Any doctrinal position that requires Scriptural contradictions cannot be the true doctrine of Christ.*" It's a good test for showing that something is wrong with a particular interpretation. But, it is harmony (the absence of contradictions) that establishes truth. And that has been the standard I used with myself and my opponent.

Instead of Fields' using fancy graphics to generate more contradictions between the Scriptures I raised and Scriptures he thinks overturn my interpretations, he needed to explain the Scriptures I raised in a way consistent with their context and grammar, and show harmony of Scripture within his amillennial view. He has failed miserably in this regard.

1. The Eternal Land Inheritance

Fields ignored completely the New Testament Scriptures I gave which state in plain language that Abraham did NOT receive any of the inheritance God promised him, not even one foot. Yet, Fields decorated one verse in Joshua, as though his fancy graphics can overturn what Steven and Paul said. Even if Fields was correct in his interpretation of Joshua 21, he has not proven my point wrong. Rather, he has introduced a contradiction between Joshua 21 and Acts 7:1-5 and Heb. 11:8-9, 13. To properly address the issue, Fields needed to explain those New Testament passages in harmony with his interpretation of Joshua, without doing violence to either. Instead, Fields ignored the New Testament passages, and then proceeded to misrepresent his own proof text!

Joshua 21:43-45 NKJV

*43 So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give **to their fathers**, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. 44 The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn **to their fathers**. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. 45 **Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel.** All came to pass.*

Fields' first mistake was to suppose that the clause, "to their fathers," refers specifically to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He failed to notice that the generation who possessed the land under Joshua consisted of the children of the generation that came out of Egypt under Moses. Moses led "their fathers" out of Egypt with God's promise of a land

flowing with milk and honey (Ex. 3:7-10). "Their fathers" are those Moses led out of Egypt (Josh. 24:6). Also, the particular promise referred to in these verses was given to "the house of Israel," not to the Patriarchs. "*Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel.*" Apparently, Fields forgot that the "house of Israel" did not exist when God made the land promise to Abraham. The "house of Israel" only came into existence with the birth of Jacob's (Israel's) 12 sons. In this verse it refers to the 12 tribes in Moses' day, not to the patriarchs. The promises that had not failed were those delivered through Moses to the "house of Israel," and not the promise God gave directly to Abraham (although it was related to it). Notice in the following passage, Solomon referred to the above passage from Joshua, yet added one critical detail.

1 Kings 8:56-59 NKJV

56 "Blessed be the LORD, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses.

57 May the LORD our God be with us, as He was with our fathers. May He not leave us nor forsake us, 58 that He may incline our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, which He commanded our fathers.

It is clear that Solomon was referring to the history recorded in Joshua, because the language is almost identical to Joshua 21. The statement in verse 57, "*May He not leave us nor forsake us,*" was borrowed from Joshua 1:5. Solomon understood the land promise mentioned in Joshua to be the one delivered to "our fathers" who came out of Egypt, and received the Law at Mount Sinai. It is apparent that the contradiction Fields has introduced between Joshua and the Scriptures I raised in the New Testament, completely evaporates when we are more careful and precise with the text and historical context. The unconditional, eternal land inheritance was promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Only a conditional land inheritance was promised to the "house of Israel" through Moses, and fulfilled under Joshua. Fields' view creates the contradiction; my view completely solves the apparent contradiction. "*Any doctrinal position that requires Scriptural contradictions cannot be the true doctrine of Christ.*"

2. The Promised Land Inheritance will be made Permanent through Jesus Christ

Here, Fields was responding to my exegesis of Galatians 3. His argument is summed up with this statement: "*It was the promise of all nations being blessed through Abraham's seed that was fulfilled in Christ.*" Apparently, it has escaped Fields' notice that his answer in section 2 contradicts his answer in section 1. Since we agree that the promise to Abraham that all nations would be blessed through Abraham's seed is only fulfilled

through Christ and the gospel, how then can everything God promised Abraham have been fulfilled under Joshua? Christ Himself is a part of that promise, and also the completion of the Great Commission! If Fields' interpretation of Joshua is correct, then the promise to Abraham that all nations would be blessed through Abraham's seed must have been fulfilled through Joshua, and cannot refer to Christ! Fields has not only created a contradiction between Joshua and Paul's statement in Gal. 3, but he has created a contradiction between Norm Fields and Norm Fields! He seems to have forgotten his own litmus test, "*Any doctrinal position that requires Scriptural contradictions cannot be the true doctrine of Christ.*"

In my previous paper, I took pains to **prove** that in Gal. 3:16 Paul was quoting Gen. 13:17 LXX, with the clause, "και τω σπερματι σου." This clause appears ONLY in Genesis with regard to **the land promise**. It NEVER refers specifically to the promise that all the seed would be blessed through Abraham's seed.

Paul also wrote, "*For if **the inheritance** is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.*" "The inheritance" mentioned by Paul is the land. There was no other inheritance promised to Abraham and his seed other than the land.

Gen 15:7-8 NKJV

*7 Then He said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, **to give you this land to inherit it.**"*

*8 And he said, "Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will **inherit it?**"*

Fields can redefine biblical words, like "inheritance," "resurrection," or "spiritual" all day long, but he cannot change God's truth, only pervert it. He also attempted to show that Paul had "salvation" in view in this chapter. I agree. The problem is that Fields imagines some sort of dichotomy between the land inheritance at the resurrection and salvation. Wrong! The hope of our salvation is "the eternal inheritance" at the resurrection, along with resurrected Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! So, his chart proves nothing except to illustrate that he is depending on circular arguments.

3. The Eternal Land Inheritance in Psalm 37

Fields finally, after my constant nagging, took a stab at Psalm 37, attempting to apply it to the return after the Babylonian captivity. But, this Psalm says nothing about returning to the land. Rather, the righteous remain in the land permanently "when the wicked are cut off." That is not what happened in the Babylonian captivity. If so, Ezekiel, Daniel, and his three friends would not have been deported to Babylon, but would have remained in the land. Also, Fields introduced yet another contradiction

between David and Jesus! Jesus quoted from Psalm 37 and applied it to His followers' **future inheritance**. Either Jesus misapplied this prophecy, or Fields is mistaken.

Psalm 37:9-11 NKJV

*9 For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the LORD, They shall inherit the earth. 10 For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; Indeed, you will look carefully for his place, But it shall be no more. 11 But **the meek shall inherit the earth**, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.*

Matt 5:5 NKJV

*5 **Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.***

"Any doctrinal position that requires Scriptural contradictions cannot be the true doctrine of Christ."

4. The Hope of Jesus' Apostles

In this section, Fields referred the reader back to his previous paper. But, he did not address my real point in either paper. So, let me restate it. Jesus' own Apostles had been instructed by Him for 3.5 years, much of it regarding the Kingdom of God. In fact, that was the major theme of most of His parables. After His resurrection, *"beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself"* (Luke 24:27). That would certainly include Jesus' own exposition of every passage dealing with His Kingdom. He also *"opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures"* (Luke 24:45). And, *"being seen by them during forty days"* He spoke *"of **the things pertaining to the kingdom of God**"* (Acts 1:3). After all this teaching, most of which we do not have, the disciples then asked Jesus, *"Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"* If Fields is right, that the disciples completely misunderstood the nature of the Kingdom after all this, then it is apparent either that Jesus was an incredibly poor teacher or else He used very poor judgment in choosing these stupid men in the first place! If Jesus' teaching even remotely resembled amillennialism, they could not have asked such a question! Further, even if they had been so stupid as to completely misunderstand everything Jesus had taught about His Kingdom, His answer would have corrected such gross error. But Jesus did no such thing. **He affirmed the premise of their question in His answer.** *"It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority."* There would be no "times or seasons" for a restored Kingdom to Israel if Jesus taught amillennialism. Jesus' teaching was consistent with the premise of their question. Their mistake was only regarding the timing of His Kingdom, not its nature. Fields has acknowledged that the disciples here had the Jewish understanding of the Kingdom at this time. He has

therefore introduced another contradiction between Jesus and His own disciples! *“Any doctrinal position that requires Scriptural contradictions cannot be the true doctrine of Christ.”*

5. The Post-Pentecost Hope was the same as the Pre-Pentecost Hope

Here Fields complained that he already answered my point from Acts 3, concerning the “restoration of all things.” Fields wrote, *“Maybe Mr. Warner should have presented further argument on these points in round one of the debate instead of dragging them over into this second round. He is supposed to be dealing with my opening argument to round two, not rehashing round one.”* That is precisely what I did in my response to his initial rebuttal. But, instead of responding to my further arguments, showing why his interpretation was impossible, he chose to devote his closing paper to demolishing straw men that had nothing to do with the topic of round one. I don’t think Fields has any room to complain about not dealing with the subject matter of a particular round. Yes, I did address this in the second round, because I was ambushed by his litany of straw men in his closing argument in round one. But, I did not fail to answer all of his points raised in his opening paper to round two.

Fields view’ requires that the Holy Spirit completely overturned the Apostles’ hope of a restored Kingdom to Israel on the Day of Pentecost. Yet, this same Holy Spirit affirmed that very hope through the prophesying of Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist.

Luke 1:67-75 NKJV

*67 Now his father Zacharias was **filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied**, saying:
68 “Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited and redeemed His people,
69 And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of His servant David,
70 As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, Who have been since the world began,
71 **That we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us,**
72 **To perform the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant,**
73 **The oath which He swore to our father Abraham:** 74 **To grant us that we,**
being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear,
75 **In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.***

Zacharias, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, interpreted the Abrahamic promise as the hope of Israel’s relief from oppression of her enemies, the “rest” that had been so illusive from Joshua’s time until the present. Jesus’ disciples were no more mistaken about their hope of Israel than was Zacharias, prophesying by the same Holy Spirit that empowered the Apostles on Pentecost. Fields’ view requires yet another contradiction, this time between the Holy Spirit speaking through Zacharias and the Holy Spirit that came upon the Apostles at Pentecost. *“Any doctrinal position that requires Scriptural contradictions cannot be the true doctrine of Christ.”*

Presuppositions vs. Exegesis

My repeated mention of Fields' Gnostic presuppositions underlying his amillennialism was not intended to insult him, or to "poison the well." It was meant as a real observation, which I was willing to document from ancient witnesses if Fields would agree to continue the debate. My contention is that amillennialism is the product of viewing Scripture through Gnostic presuppositions. I never called Fields a "Gnostic." I don't believe he is. Gnostics were polytheists. However, pointing out the early evolution of Christian theology away from the Apostolic Faith, and the real source of a particular belief, is not the same as Fields' attempt to link me with Jehovah's Witnesses. If Fields would like to show that I derived my thinking from the Jehovah's Witnesses, let him try. If they happened to get something right for a change, and are therefore in agreement with something I wrote, good for them! I hope they keep it up! But my view was the orthodox Faith of the early Church, long before there was a Watchtower, or Charles T. Russell.

I AM claiming, however, that the ancient Gnostic dichotomy between "spiritual" (non-material) and physical is the real culprit in amillennial thinking. I proved that it was rampant among Gnostics at the time of the early Church by quoting Irenaeus. And I showed that the interpretations of Scripture used by Gnostics are the same ones used by Fields. My repeated mention of Gnostics was because their presuppositions are the same as Fields'. It is easy to observe the evolution of Christian doctrine from early chiliasm to amillennialism, thanks to Origen's and Augustine's work. I am alleging a real traceable linkage of modern amillennialism back to Augustine, back to Origen, and back to the Gnostic presuppositions that both men had. (Origen remained a Neo-Platonist to the end, and Augustine was formerly a Manichean Gnostic). I plan to document this evolution away from the Apostles' doctrine in a future article. Now, if Fields wants to attempt to trace my theology back to some source at Watchtower, I'd sure be interested in seeing it.

The Resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15

In dealing with 1 Corinthians 15, the clear gulf between what I teach and what Fields teaches is plainly exposed. It is nothing new. It is precisely the same sharp difference between the early Christian apologists and the Gnostics they sought to overthrow. It always comes back to the flesh of Jesus Christ.

I had honestly hoped to turn Fields back from the precipice of heresy, by pointing out that his interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15 logically demanded that he deny the resurrected flesh of Jesus. But, rather than turn back from the precipice, he leaped headlong into it! In Fields' view, Jesus disposed of His body of resurrected flesh when he ascended to heaven. His "incarnation" no longer continues. Thirty three years after

the “incarnation” Jesus allegedly experienced the “excarnation.” His body was a temporary flesh suit that could be discarded. Yet, the angels told the astonished Apostles, “this same Jesus which is taken up from you will come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.” In what manner did they see Him ascend? If Jesus is really coming back “in like manner” as He ascended, then He will descend from heaven in the same body He formerly showed to His disciples. This is also demanded by Jesus’ own words in Revelation. “I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore” (Rev. 1:18). It was His body alone that “was dead.” Yet, He told John “I am alive forevermore.” The “life” Jesus spoke of was that of His flesh. Jesus’ body of flesh was therefore alive when John received this vision some 6+ decades after the ascension!

If Fields is right, then Jesus cannot be “the Christ,” and fulfill the promise to David.

Acts 2:30-31 NKJV

30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.

Fields is actually right that Jesus’ body of flesh was raised because His ministry on earth was not finished. He has yet to rule on the Throne of David in the flesh. The above passage states plainly that it was His promised reigning on the Throne of David in the flesh that was the reason for the resurrection of His flesh, the fruit of David’s body. Of course, Fields thinks Jesus is NOW seated on David’s throne in heaven. Yet, even if that were so, it requires His body of flesh, descended from David’s seed, to be seated on that throne. If the occupant of the Throne of David does not possess the flesh descended from David, then he is not the Christ promised to David. If Fields is willing to go that far in denying the flesh of Jesus Christ, then he truly is a Gnostic, and of the spirit of Antichrist.

*Fields wrote: “It is in answering an anticipated objection to the resurrection of the dead that Paul reveals something of the resurrection body (1 Cor. 15:35f). He says that there are all kinds of **different** bodies (vv. 39-41). The point being, all bodies are not the same. Then he says, “So also is the resurrection of the dead” (42). That is, the body that is raised is **different** from the body that died. He says that difference is between “natural” and “spiritual.” The body that dies is a “natural” body, the body that is raised is a “spiritual” body. **They are not the same body!**”*

Fields’ exegesis of this passage is utterly atrocious! Remember, his original claim was that a “spiritual body” was not a physical body, which means not made of matter. Paul

indicates just the opposite in this passage. Fields cannot see beyond his Gnostic presupposition, that “spiritual” means non-physical. I have already proven that wrong.

1 Cor 15:39-44 NKJV

*39 **All flesh is not the same flesh**, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds.*

Paul did not contrast “flesh” with some non material existence. Rather, he compared various kinds of flesh. Yet, all of them are true flesh, made of matter, but having different characteristics, some more glorious than others. He continued:

40 There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory.

Here, Paul referred to the “celestial bodies,” the sun, moon, planets, and stars. He compared them amongst each other. He did not distinguish material from non material, but one kind of physical body from another similar one, the difference being the level of “glory” one has above another. It was the “glory,” and not the substance, that he was distinguishing. He continued:

*42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. **The body** is sown in corruption, **it** is raised in incorruption. 43 **It** is sown in dishonor, **it** is raised in glory. **It** is sown in weakness, **it** is raised in power. 44 **It** is sown a natural body, **it** is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.”*

It is critical that you follow the pronouns, “it.” All of them have “the body” as their antecedent. That means, the very same body that died and went into the grave in dishonor and weakness will be raised in glory and power! This is the contrast that Paul referred to in his illustrations in the previous verses. It is the same body, but it is much more glorious, not to mention incorruptible. Fields says it is not the same body, and mocks the resurrection of infants, or aborted babies. Yet, since Jesus is the prototype of our resurrection, to be “like Him” means we will appear around the physical age of 33 in the resurrection. Why is it so hard for Fields to comprehend an aborted baby being resurrected bodily as an adult, when God was able to turn a lump of dust into a man called Adam? I think Fields underestimates the power of God. Incidentally, at the risk of sounding like a broken record, his arguments for the implausibility of a physical resurrection are precisely the same ones the Gnostics employed, as cited by Tertullian in his treatise, On the Resurrection of the Flesh.

Fields appealed to John's statement, "that it does not yet appear what we shall be," as evidence that we will not be like Jesus' resurrected body. (Of course, Phil. 3:21 proves otherwise). Yet, Fields ignores the rest of the verse.

1 John 3:2-3 NKJV

*2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, **we shall be like Him**, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

Verse 2 simply indicates that our future role **as sons of God** has not yet been fully revealed. But what HAS been revealed, (hence "we know"), is that we will be like Him (as He appeared in the resurrection). In other words, the observation Jesus' disciples made of Jesus' resurrected body is the extent of our knowledge, which is incomplete. The full extent of our sonship is yet to be revealed. However, we DO have an understanding of our physical state in the resurrection, because we will be like Jesus. Note the contrast between our sonship "now," and what we "shall be" as sons. It is the relationship of sons to the Father that is still shrouded in mystery, not the resurrection.

Job's Resurrection

Fields claimed that Job did not refer to his own resurrection, but to his healing. He claims I am twisting the Scriptures. In fact, I am the one taking Job's words at face value, and Fields is taking liberties with the text.

Job 19:25-27 NKJV

*25 For I know that my Redeemer lives, **And He shall stand at last on the earth**; 26 And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That **in my flesh I shall see God**, 27 **Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold**, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*

Here are the things Job actually prophesied. Let's see if any of them actually happened during Job's life.

- My Redeemer lives, and will stand on the earth at last.
- After my skin is destroyed, in my flesh I will see God
- My own eyes will see Him

Who is Job's Redeemer? Is it not Jesus? Did Jesus stand on the earth in Job's day? There is no record of such an appearance. Fields has to assume one. Was Job's skin really "destroyed" due to his illness? No, not literally. Fields has to take this statement as hyperbole instead of a true, accurate statement. Fields wrote, "Certainly, Job's flesh had

been destroyed.” Really? Why then did Job place this in the future, after which he would see God? If Fields is right, Job would have placed his flesh’s destruction in the past. By His saying, *“after my skin is destroyed, in my flesh I shall see God,”* Job would have made an illogical statement because his skin had already been destroyed. Placing his expectation of seeing God with His own eyes after something that had already past is a redundant statement. Did Job actually behold God with his own eyes in the flesh? No. Granted, Job encountered God, but only audibly, not visually, (Job. 38:1). Nothing Job prophesied actually happened to him in his lifetime, if you take his words at face value.

Fields accused me of either willfully twisting the Scriptures, or being ignorant, and that I should repent. Is it really twisting Scripture to interpret the words of Scripture literally when it makes perfect sense to do so? Is it really twisting Scripture when we recognize that a redundant statement renders an interpretation invalid? Fields has resorted to hyperbole. He accepts an illogical statement on Job’s part. And he said Job’s later encounter with God was “not what he expect[ed].” What Fields is really saying is that Job was mistaken in his prophecy, thinking he would see God with his own eyes of flesh, when that is not what actually happened. In other words, Job’s prophecy was not actually true. Fields did all this with a straight face, while accusing me of twisting Job.

Fields appealed to “context” in support of his story. But what in the context demands it? Nothing! True, Job was suffering. But he had NOT received any indication that he would recover, or that he would encounter God before he died from his curse. Job clearly expected to die from his illness (7:21). He did NOT expect to encounter God and be healed. And he certainly did not “KNOW” this for a fact. His wife told him to “curse God and die” (2:9). Job said, *“Are not my days few? Cease! Leave me alone, that I may take a little comfort, Before I go to the place from which I shall not return, To the land of darkness and the shadow of death, A land as dark as darkness itself, As the shadow of death, without any order, Where even the light is like darkness.”* (10:20-22). That is hardly the expectation of seeing God and being healed from his disease in his lifetime. Yet, Job was determined to remain true to God even to the bitter end: *“Though He slay me, yet I will trust Him”* (13:15). He just wanted to know why. His words in Job 19:25-27 were his statement of faith, that despite his not knowing the reason why he was suffering, and not knowing whether he would recover, there was one thing He knew for sure, and consequently took comfort in: *“For **I know** that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, **this I know**, That in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!”*

Job’ skin being destroyed in the future referred to his expectation of dying from his disease, and his corpse rotting. Yet, he knew that even after all this, His Redeemer would stand in the latter day on the earth, and that in his flesh he would see God.

For a much fuller exegesis of this passage from the Hebrew text, please see the following article by Roger Samsel, my successor at the Pristine Faith Restoration Society. http://www.pfrs.org/commentary/Job_19_25.pdf

Ezekiel's Prophecy of the Dry Bones

Fields fared no better with his treatment of Ezekiel 37. One thing I noticed in his treatment of Job and of this passage is that Fields offers no actual evidence for his interpretation. He merely declares it so, and tries to berate anything else with his demagoguery. This is the tactic of someone who does not actually have truth on his side. Fields wrote: *"It is incomprehensible that Mr. Warner expects any serious Bible student to believe that Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones is evidence for his physical resurrection."* What I expect is that "a serious Bible student" would at least first consider the normal literal understanding of the words of Scripture. And if a literal understanding fits the context and historical situation, that he would not dismiss it just because it conflicts with his theology. But, I suppose that my definition of "a serious Bible student" is far different than Fields' definition.

The historical situation was indeed the Babylonian captivity. In Ezekiel's mind, God had promised the land to Abraham and his descendants forever. Yet, Nebuchadnezzar had deported the Jews to Babylon. The promise of an everlasting inheritance seemed to have failed. One of the key things Fields overlooked is God's own interpretation of the vision he gave to Ezekiel. Since Fields implied that Job's prophecy was mistaken, perhaps he thinks that God was confused when he interpreted the vision for Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 37:11-14

*11 Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are **the whole house of Israel**. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' 12 Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, O My people, **I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.** 13 **Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves.** 14 I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken it and performed it," says the LORD.'*

Fields apparently did not notice that the bones are "the whole house of Israel." It was the "house of Judah" that went into the Babylonian captivity, not the "house of Israel." The northern kingdom of Israel had already been defeated and captured by the Assyrians. The clause, "the whole house of Israel" refers to ALL of Israel's (Jacob's) descendants who had died in the hope of realizing God's eternal promise to Abraham. Because of Israel's and Judah's being driven from the land, those who had died in hope

exclaimed from their graves, “our hope is lost.” The Promised Land had fallen completely into enemy hands. In the vision, they were crying out from their graves, because the covenant God made with the patriarchs appeared to have failed. Yet, God’s response to them was threefold:

- He would open their graves, and raise them up from their graves
- He would restore them to the land
- He would put the Holy Spirit IN them

One problem with Fields’ interpretation is his making the resurrection symbolic of the restoration to the land. Yet, the text clearly says that God will raise them from their graves AND restore them to the land – two distinct things. Furthermore, Fields has God interpreting a vision with non-literal language. You cannot EXPLAIN an allegory or metaphor with more allegory and metaphor! You can only explain allegory or metaphor with literal terms. Therefore, when God explained the vision as meaning He will open their graves and bring them out of their graves and bring them back to the land, that is precisely what He meant!

This was also Daniel’s expectation. In the 12th chapter of Daniel, the angel told him he must die, but would arise in his inheritance at the end of the days (Dan. 12:13). The word translated “inheritance” is a Hebrew word meaning “lot” (the casting of lots). This was the practice of dividing the land inheritance under the Law. And it will be used again in the coming Kingdom.

Num 33:54

54 And you shall divide the land by lot as an inheritance among your families; to the larger you shall give a larger inheritance, and to the smaller you shall give a smaller inheritance; there everyone’s inheritance shall be whatever falls to him by lot.

Ezekiel 48:28-29

29 This is the land which you shall divide by lot as an inheritance among the tribes of Israel, and these are their portions,” says the Lord GOD.

Daniel’s land inheritance (lot) will be received by him after his death and resurrection! That is when he will be restored to the land, just as in Ezekiel’s prophecy.

Fields also failed to notice that Ezekiel 37-39 parallels Revelation 20. After Israel’s resurrection at Christ’s coming, and their being restored to the land (Ezek. 37), and dwelling at peace (Ezek. 38:10-12), Jerusalem will be attacked by Gog of the land of Magog. This parallels Revelation 20 exactly, which has the “first resurrection” at the

beginning of the millennium, followed by the battle of “Gog and Magog” at the end of the millennium. There is no question that this is the same battle, since no other battle involving Gog is mentioned anywhere in Scripture or history. Therefore, the resurrection in Ezekiel 37 is indeed “the first resurrection” of Revelation 20. The Gog – Magog war that is linked to the time of peace which begins at the resurrection is still future according to Revelation 20. Again, it is harmony of Scripture (both Testaments) that establishes truth. Contradiction establishes error.

The Resurrection of the Righteous and the Wicked

In this section, Fields seems to have abandoned the original two Scriptures he used to try to prove that there is but one future resurrection. Instead, he brought three more to the table. Yet, none of them say what he is trying so desperately to squeeze out of them. Matthew 25 does speak of Jesus separating the sheep from the goats. But, this has nothing to do with the resurrection, but only with those still alive on the earth at His coming. Some will be cast into the lake of fire (those who worship the Beast). Others will enter the Kingdom. Fields seems to have missed the fact that these people **enter the Kingdom** at Christ’s second coming. Yet His amillennialism has the Kingdom concluding at Jesus’ coming.

He next called Acts 17:31 as his witness. *“Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness.”* Yes, we agree. He will judge “the world” (not Christians) after the Millennium mentioned in Rev. 20. It is called “The Great White Throne.” That is when the dead will be raised and judged. The judgment of Matt. 25 is of the living, at the beginning of the millennium. Acts 17:31 is the judgment of the dead at the end of the millennium.

Fields’ next witness is 2 Thess. 1:6-10. But, that passage speaks of the destruction of the wicked armies at the battle of Armagaddon, also mentioned in Rev. 19, and Zech 14. It is the destruction of the armies of the nations that dare to stand against Christ at His coming. There is no resurrection of these people here. They were already alive at Jesus’ second coming. Fields writes, *“These passages do not refer to separate events occurring many years apart. They refer to what will happen in one hour of one day! God created the universe in six days, does Mr. Warner doubt that he can judge mankind in one hour?”* I don’t doubt His ability. But, that is not the question. The question is, What did He say He will do? Fields is assuming what he is trying to prove. He has not shown a single Scripture that demands one resurrection for everyone.

Daniel 12

Next, Fields takes on Daniel 12, which I used in my rebuttal as an example of a resurrection of some of the dead (while leaving others in their graves). Fields wrote:

“In his attempt to show a separate resurrection for the wicked and the just Mr. Warner once again twists Scripture to fit his warped view of Christ and his kingdom. He completely ignores how Christ places Daniel’s vision of Daniel 12:2 in the context of the destruction of Jerusalem. Speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, Jesus said,

Matt 24:15, When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

Daniel wrote about the “abomination of desolation” in Daniel 12! His vision of many rising from the dust is in the context of that event when God would show once and for all that Judaism was no longer his chosen system of obedience. Those Jews who had converted to Christ and continued in obedience to God would shine as God’s faithful servants. Those who had rejected Christ to be destroyed in Jerusalem’s fall would suffer the everlasting consequences of such rebellion against the will of God.”

Let’s compare Daniel’s prophecy of the resurrection to Fields’ explanation.

Dan 12:1-3, 13

1 “At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.

2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever. ...

13 “But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.”

Fields says that this is a prophecy of the AD70 destruction of Jerusalem, which he equates with the “abomination of desolation.” He declares that so, with no evidence to back it up. However, this resurrection is said to take place 1290 days after the “abomination of desolation.” That would put it in AD74 if Fields is correct. Also, in this resurrection, Daniel himself is to be raised, and receive his land inheritance 1290 days after the “abomination of desolation” (cf. vss. 11-13). It simply does not fit with what actually happened in AD70.

Fields is simply wrong in connecting this to AD70. The “abomination of desolation” in Matt. 24:15 is the same one mentioned in Daniel 12. But, it is 3.5 years before the second

coming of Christ. This is abundantly clear in Jesus' statement. Both Daniel and Jesus spoke of a "time of trouble" unlike anything before or after. Jesus named the "abomination of desolation" as the event that begins this time of trouble. And, according to Daniel, from the time of this event until the resurrection and rewarding of the saints will be only 1290 days. Jesus then said, "*immediately* after the tribulation of those days" the world would see Him coming on the clouds of heaven with power and glory, and He would send His angels to gather together His elect (Matt. 24:29-31). Did that happen in AD70? Hardly! Jesus has not come back yet. Can Fields fit 1,939 years since the destruction of Jerusalem into "immediately" without grossly twisting the Scriptures? I doubt it.

But, most astounding of all is his interpretation of the resurrection itself in Daniel 12:2. Here is what Daniel wrote:

Daniel 12:2, 13 NASB

2 "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. ...

13 "But as for you [Daniel], go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age."

Here is Fields' interpretation:

"His vision of many rising from the dust is in the context of that event when God would show once and for all that Judaism was no longer his chosen system of obedience. Those Jews who had converted to Christ and continued in obedience to God would shine as God's faithful servants. Those who had rejected Christ to be destroyed in Jerusalem's fall would suffer the everlasting consequences of such rebellion against the will of God."

I would like to know how living Jews who had already converted to Christ and continued in obedience would "awake" to "everlasting life" when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. Also, Daniel was long since dead. Yet, Fields' interpretation would place him living in Jerusalem in AD70! Fields' interpretation is nothing short of willful mutilation of the text of Scripture to explain away problem passages with the most bizarre interpretations.

On the other hand, I am taking these things at face value. 1290 days means 1290 days. "*Immediately after the tribulation of those days*" means "immediately." Arising from "sleep in the dust" means "resurrection." All Fields' fancy footwork proves that he is trying to force his view on the Scriptures.

Before leaving this section, let me point out that Fields ignored the most difficult resurrection passage for him, Philippians 3:11. He cannot allocate that one to AD70, because Paul included Himself in it.

John 14

In this section, Fields sought to rehabilitate his claim that John 14 promises heaven to the disciples when Jesus returns. The main thrust of his argument is that the place Jesus was going was heaven. Therefore heaven must be the place prepared for His disciples. While it is true that Jesus eventually ascended to heaven 43 days later, He was going somewhere else first, the very next day – to the cross.

John 13:33-14:6

*33 Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, **'Where I am going, you cannot come,'** so now I say to you. 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

*36 Simon Peter said to Him, "**Lord, where are You going?**"*

*Jesus answered him, "**Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.**"*

*37 Peter said to Him, "**Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake.**"*

38 Jesus answered him, "Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times.

*14:1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 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.** 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And **where I go you know, and the way you know.**"*

5 Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"

*6 Jesus said to him, "**I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.**"*

Where was Jesus going? Was it to heaven? Or was it to the Sanhedrin at the Temple, then to the cross to make atonement for His disciples? The PLACE Jesus was going was clearly associated with the "way" of reconciliation to the Father. When Peter said he was ready to follow Jesus immediately to wherever He was going, Jesus informed him that he was NOT ready to follow Him, and that he would deny Him. Jesus was arrested that very night, and taken to stand trial before the Sanhedrin at the Temple. And, just as

Jesus predicted, Peter was not prepared to “follow” Him to the place He was going. He had to stand trial before the Jewish leaders, be condemned to death, and hang on a cross. That is where He was going. And in doing so, He was preparing a place for His disciples as co-heirs in His own inheritance – His coming Kingdom (in which the Temple in Jerusalem will play a major role).

Haggai prophesied of the future Temple in Jerusalem while the second Temple was under construction in the days of Zerubbabel. And his prophecy was quoted in the New Testament as being still future, and associated with the Kingdom we will inherit at Jesus’ second coming.

Haggai 2:6-9

*6 "For thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; 7 and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and **I will fill this temple with glory,**' says the LORD of hosts. 8 'The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' says the LORD of hosts. 9 **The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,**' says the LORD of hosts. 'And **in this place** I will give peace,' says the LORD of hosts."*

Paul quoted this Kingdom Temple prophecy as being yet future.

Heb 12:26-29

26... but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." 27 Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

*28 Therefore, since **we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken,** let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God is a consuming fire.*

The glorious Temple in Haggai is still future. God is going to bring His glory into it. It will be far more magnificent than even Solomon’s Temple. This is what Jesus referred to as “My Father’s house.” By Jesus’ going away to the cross, He prepared a place in His Temple for His disciples to reign with Him, to be the co-heirs of His inheritance. Yes, Jesus was ultimately going to ascend to heaven to take His seat at the Father’s side until His enemies are made His footstool (Psalm 110:1). But first, He had to prepare the way of salvation on the cross, which made it possible for His disciples to reign with Him in His coming Kingdom.

That the context of the discussion in the Upper Room was Christ's coming Kingdom on earth is proven by Luke's account.

Luke 22:15-18, 28-30

15 Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

17 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; 18 for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." ...

28 "But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. 29 And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, 30 that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

All this what was said in the same conversation recorded in John 14:1-3. The topic of discussion was the coming to earth of Christ's Kingdom, and the Apostles' future role as co-heirs of the Kingdom. Their role was to be co-rulers with Christ, eating at His table, and even observing the Passover with Him. It was in this context that Jesus told them He was leaving them to go prepare a place for them within the "many dwellings" of "My Father's house."

The Earth or the Land

I spent the most time in my previous paper on 2 Peter 3, showing how Fields wrenched it from its context, and interpreted it in a vacuum using his Gnostic presuppositions. Yet, Fields' response was exactly 8 sentences long. He addressed none of my points but one – the meaning of the word rendered "elements." He offered no evidence at all to overturn my argument, or buttress his original argument.

All the parallel passages I brought forward, from both the Old and New Testaments, concerning the burning of the land at Jesus' coming and its restoration, were completely ignored. I have stated repeatedly throughout this paper that the central feature of TRUTH is HARMONY of Scripture. Those parallel passages, when seen in harmony with Peter's words, expose Fields' alien interpretation. Peter even said that he was writing to remind his readers of "the words of the prophets" in general, and "His promise" in particular (contained in Isaiah 65-66). I pointed out those prophecies, and how they parallel Peter's own words. Yet, all this was completely ignored by Fields.

Conclusion

One of my primary objectives in this debate was to clear away the façade of orthodoxy, and expose amillennialism for what it really is. Just like preterism, amillennialism ends up destroying the Biblical teaching of the person of Christ. Rejecting the Jewish eschatology taught in the Old and New Testaments, and imposing upon the New Testament the Gnostic hope of a destiny in the heavens among the gods, creates a chain reaction of devastation to Christian orthodoxy. Since the creation is physical and material, and God is not, a destiny in heaven implies it is a non-physical place. A non-physical place implies a non-physical form of our existence. A non-physical “resurrection” (which is no resurrection at all) implies that man’s flesh is not an essential part of who he is, but a disposable accessory. It is therefore not essential to his future inheritance. This heretical view of humanity then becomes the model of Jesus’ own incarnation, that He assumed a physical body of flesh temporarily, and that His flesh from the seed of Abraham and of David is not essential to who He is. The problem of Jesus’ flesh and bone resurrected body is answered either by denying the resurrection of Jesus completely (He only appeared to rise bodily), or else claiming He disposed of His flesh body at His ascension into heaven. Therefore, Jesus is not really coming back “bodily,” as the disciples saw Him ascend, because He no longer has a physical body. The logical conclusion is this: The precious flesh body that suffered for our sins on Calvary is quickly discarded by amillennialists. The blood of Jesus is discarded, and no longer of any value. It does not exist anymore. And when we partake of communion, we are symbolically ingesting the flesh and blood of Christ that no longer exists. If you are an amillennialist, I hope that this at least makes you uncomfortable.

Finally, I was hoping to go at least two more rounds with Norm Fields, one on Revelation 20, and one on eschatology in the early Church. But he has declined. I have an article on my website dealing with Revelation 20, so that will have to suffice for now.

I would humbly ask any amillennialist reading this paper to read and ponder two early Church documents that are available online, written by Tertullian in the second century. In them, Tertullian defended the Apostolic teaching of the bodily resurrection of Christ, and the bodily resurrection of believers, against the Gnostic heretics. You will find Norm Fields’ arguments in perfect harmony with those of the Gnostic heretics that Tertullian refuted. Those two documents are:

On the Flesh of Christ – <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0315.htm>

On the Resurrection of the Flesh – <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0316.htm>