

The Resurrection

Response to Rebuttal

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Interpretation Methods

Biblical Theology vs. Systematic Theology

Frost begins his rebuttal by appealing to a "system." Rather than taking the passages I used at face value, he brushes them aside by an appeal to a "framework" within which everything must fit. Instead of questioning his framework when so many passages obviously do not fit, he thinks it best to ignore, bend, and twist them to make them fit the "framework." What Frost seems to miss is that a "system" is the **END PRODUCT** of a well harmonized and synthesized Biblical theology. It is not the beginning point with which we must force everything to fit. Frost writes, *"If the framework is true, and one comes across a Scripture that appears to contradict it, then one must do one of two things: reject the framework, or make the Scripture "fit"."* Frost has obviously chosen the latter of the two. But he does not seem to acknowledge that one's system should always be in a state of flux. We should hold our system somewhat loosely, always being willing to modify the system (radically if necessary) when we come across Scriptures that do not fit. Frost is apparently not willing to do this despite the many passages that I have alluded to which are contrary to his system. He continues: *"A builder starts with a blueprint, first. Then he adds the material to fit the plan. This is why the holy church has called this task systematic theology. It is never a question as to whether or not we have frameworks, but always a question of whether or not our frameworks are correct."* Imagine a builder using Frost's mystical interpretation when reading his blueprint! What kind of house do you suppose he would build if the plain sense was not the guiding principle in his interpretation of the blueprint?

The Significance of Systematic Theology

A true "systematic theology" is developed gradually by interpreting every passage in agreement with every other passage. **It absolutely DEMANDS that we CONSISTENTLY apply specific rules of interpretation without bias.** What Frost has demonstrated is heavy bias, and forcing the texts to fit his brand of eschatology. He has built his system using only a select few passages, and then insists that when other passages do not fit his system, they cannot be taken for what they plainly say. **Such a system cannot be legitimate, because it values only a few select passages at the expense of many others.** A correct systematic theology is the product of harmonizing all of the Scriptures. ANY Scripture that does not fit should cause one to question and modify his system. These kinds of problems expose errors in the system. And based on the numbers of passages we have already shown to be in conflict with preterism, that system is shown to be seriously wanting.

Dispensational Hermeneutics

Next Frost tries to debunk the Dispensationalist guiding hermeneutical principle, which he calls "literalism." First, "literalism" is HIS word, not the word normally used by dispensationalists to describe our interpretive methodology. "Literalism" is not really a good term, because it implies a rigid literal interpretation even when this would present absurdities. Frost has tried to show that rigid literalism can lead to absurdities using a few examples. True enough. And that is why dispensationalists are not rigid "literalists." Frost's argument against Dispensational hermeneutics is a straw man because as consistent (Progressive) Dispensationalists, we do not do what he suggests and then debunks.

Dispensationalists use the term "grammatical - historical" to identify our methodology, because we believe each passage must be understood according to the normal rules of grammar, as well as within its historical context. While that USUALLY means a passage is understood literally, it is not always. Every language includes many metaphors and figures of speech, as well as allegories. Consistent Dispensationalists recognize many forms of non-literal speech in Scripture. The question is; **how does one objectively determine when something is not literal?** Dispensationalists use the same method for interpreting Scripture as we all use for interpreting normal speech and literature. We assume the words are literal by default, UNLESS there is some obvious reason in the immediate context to indicate they are not literal. We all judge people's words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs based on **a common method of interpreting speech**, just as you are now judging and interpreting what I have written. You expect me to say what I mean and mean what I say. And you expect that if I want to convey something in colorful metaphorical language, it will be obvious to you in the context. You do not expect me to use mystical hidden language, at least not in straightforward dialogue or monologue. We take things literally, unless we know from experience, or from the immediate context, that a word or phrase is a figure of speech. By using a fixed (consistent) METHOD of interpretation, we can be completely OBJECTIVE in our interpretation of normal speech as well as Scripture.

Frost's Preterist Hermeneutics

Frost's guiding principle is NOT a fixed METHOD of interpretation. Rather, it is a fixed group of PRESUPPOSITIONS. He assumes certain "facts" are absolute. Any passage of Scripture that does not conform to those assumed "facts" must be handled in a mystical fashion. His assumed "facts" center around his interpretation of a select few passages which he claims establish the TIMING of the fulfillment of the end-time prophecies. Since the **DETAILS** (the WHAT) of the prophecies do not fit his understanding of the **TIMING** (the WHEN), he simply says the details are not "literal," and looks for some mystical interpretation no matter how bizarre. This entire process is subjective and foolish. It is NOT a recipe for finding the truth. It is a recipe for "proving" one's own view using the Scriptures. Frost does NOT apply the **same methodology** to the **DETAILS** (the WHAT) of end-time events that he claims to use regarding the **TIMING** (the WHEN) of those events. This is a huge fallacy in preterism. It is a double standard which completely undermines the entire system.

Progressive Dispensationalists seek to be CONSISTENT in applying a fixed METHOD, no matter where that method takes us. **Consistency and harmony of ALL Scripture is the goal, using a single method of interpretation.** We seek to apply a consistent interpretive principle to the DETAILS (the WHAT) and the TIMING (the WHEN) of end-time events, as well as every other Scripture. We are not guided by presuppositions (sacred cows, or things we insist must be true), but by a search for truth. Our presuppositions are ALWAYS open to reexamination and refinement when we come across Scripture that is at odds with our system. We modify the system when it interferes with CONSISTENCY. Frost changes methodology randomly in any given passage to make it fit the system he has erected. That makes Frost's preterism a man made concoction, based on man's subjective philosophical ideas. Progressive Dispensationalism seeks to submit itself to the Scriptures, consistently interpreted, using THE ONLY known legitimate method of interpreting any kind of language.

This raises the question of how we know that our method of interpretation is correct. The answer is again CONSISTENCY. The Scriptures will always be in harmony if our method is correct. We must be willing to make adjustments to our methodology as well as our system. But, when we do so, we are looking for a particular **kind** of outcome, not a particular outcome. Whatever our METHOD is, when we apply it consistently to ALL of the Scripture, every part of Scripture must agree with every other part of Scripture. That is the true test of one's systematic theology as well as one's method of interpretation.

Visions & Dreams vs. Direct Prophecy

Frost seeks to illustrate that dispensationalists' so-called "literalism" is absurd by appealing to Christ's returning on a white horse in Rev. 19. But his example only serves to illustrate the weakness of his own system and the strength of dispensational hermeneutics. It is a straw man argument. Frost thinks it is absurd to suppose Jesus will arrive in the clouds riding a white horse at His parousia. Perhaps so, perhaps not. But, let's take a look at the NATURE of the prophecy in Revelation 19. Did John state that Jesus will come in power and glory riding a white horse? No, that is not what John said at all. John was NOT giving a **direct prophecy**. He did not say, "*when Jesus comes, He will be riding a white horse.*" He was describing for his readers **what he saw in a vision**. "*And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse...*" (v. 11). John SAW a beast rise up out of the sea in chapter 13. He also SAW a woman riding a beast in chapter 17 in another vision. Is there anyone who would suppose that a literal beast will rise up from the sea, and a real woman will ride the beast, and drink from a cup filled with the blood of the martyrs in the last days? Of course not! They are symbols, because John was seeing a series of VISIONS. The context is pretty plain that many of the things John SAW were allegorical representations of what would take place in the future. Some of the things he saw MIGHT be literal representations. But, that cannot be taken for granted. That is the nature of prophetic visions and dreams. They are frequently (but not always) allegories. We know this because such symbols are sometimes interpreted for us in Scripture in the immediate context. For example, after John saw the woman riding the beast, an angel explained to him what these things represent (17:7-18).

Joseph gave the interpretation of the Egyptian king's prophetic dreams. Did his dream of the seven fat cattle eaten up by the seven thin cattle come true literally? No. But the exact interpretation of the dream did come true literally. Did Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a great image come true? Did a giant image appear? No, but the interpretation of the dream revealed through Daniel certainly did! The details of dreams and visions (prophetic or otherwise) should not be held to the same interpretive standards as direct statements of Scripture. (However, explicit interpretations of dreams and visions given in Scripture should be held to the same standard).

Prophecy is not only given in visions and dreams. Most often it is given in direct prophetic statements. For example Jesus stated, *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days **shall** the sun be darkened, and the moon **shall** not give her light, and the stars **shall** fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens **shall** be shaken: And **then shall appear** the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and **then shall** all the tribes of the earth mourn, and **they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory**. And **he shall** send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and **they shall** gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other"* (Matt. 24:29-31). Jesus stated that certain things ABSOLUTELY WILL happen *"immediately after the tribulation of those days."* This is not a dream, vision, parable, metaphor, or allegory. The disciples asked a straightforward question, and Jesus gave a straightforward answer. In Frost's preterism, these things "shall" not actually happen. Rather, something else would happen of which these things are mere symbols. If that is true, then at best Jesus was a mystic, seeking to couch His meaning in occult language. At worst He was a liar and deceiver.

We can see the same kind of direct prophecy from Paul. *"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We **shall** not all sleep, but **we shall** all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet **shall** sound, and **the dead shall be raised** incorruptible, and **we shall be changed**. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then **shall** be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory"* (1 Cor 15:51-54). And again, *"For **the Lord himself shall descend from heaven** with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ **shall** rise first: Then we which are alive and remain **shall** be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so **shall** we ever be with the Lord"* (1 Thes 4:16-17).

When handling prophetic visions and dreams, we do not insist on a rigid literal interpretation of the details. Each vision should be evaluated in light of past (more direct) prophecy, because apocalyptic visions and dreams were meant to compliment direct prophecy. But, we DO insist on a purely literal understanding of the INTERPRETATION of the symbols when they are given in Scripture. For example, when the angel told John that the "woman" riding the beast was *"that great city that reigneth over the kings of the earth."* The interpretation of the symbol given in the context is always literal. The woman is a symbol of Rome, the "great city" that was at that time reigning over the kings of the earth. A symbol is not interpreted with another symbol.

The Danger of Mystical Interpretation

Frost writes, *"Tim gives the appearance that to speak in "figurative" language, or interpret the Bible in various passages in this way is somehow dangerous."* But Frost missed the point entirely. Figurative language contained in Scripture is not itself dangerous if it is recognized as such. The danger is in mistaking metaphors as being literal and mistaking literal statements as figurative. To properly identify what is figurative and what is literal requires a CONSISTENT METHODOLOGY. It is Frost's ARBITRARY methodology that is dangerous. That is, claiming that ANY PASSAGE HE CHOOSES is not literal just because it does not agree with his system. That is SUBJECTIVE interpretation. **Subjective interpretation is dangerous.** Only OBJECTIVE interpretation can lead to truth, because it submits every part of the system to the written text, rather than subjecting the words of Scripture to the assumed system. If something is not literal, it must be shown from the grammar or context why it is not literal, not merely dismissed or explained away just because it doesn't fit one's system.

Frost appeals to Hebrews, claiming that *"the tabernacle of Moses was a "type" of the true tabernacle in heaven."* No, not a "type," but a MODEL of the Temple in heaven. There is a REAL place called "heaven." And in it there is a real tangible structure called the "Temple." The plans God gave Moses to construct the Tabernacle had many of the same features as the Temple in heaven (cf. Heb. 8:5, Heb. 9:11-12, 22-23). It was constructed as a copy of the heavenly Temple (Heb. 8:5). Frost continues by mixing the metaphor with reality, which is the standard operating procedure for mystical interpretation. He writes, *"The holy of holies of Moses' construction was a type of the true holy of holies we are bidden to enter. Are you really there? Are you really in the holy of holies? If you answer "yes" to this question, then welcome to "mystical" theology."* **But the correct answer is a resounding no!** We are NOT really or actually in the "holy of holies!" Frost has done what mystics always do. He makes reality a metaphor, and makes the metaphor into the reality!

In Heb. 10:19-22 Paul used the Tabernacle of Moses as a metaphor (or parable) to illustrate our current relationship with God. When Paul's Jewish readers were under the Old Covenant, only the high priest could approach the holy of holies once a year on Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). The Jews were separated from God's presence by walls, veils, and a priesthood that stood (metaphorically) between them and Jehovah. But, since Christ's atoning sacrifice, Paul's Jewish readers no longer were separated from a holy God by these things! Paul used the Tabernacle metaphor to illustrate this point. *"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, ... Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water"* (Heb. 10:19,22). This was Paul's metaphorical and colorful way of saying to his Jewish readers that they are not separated from God any longer by the priesthood, or the veil of the Temple, or the walls surrounding the Temple! Paul recognized that the actual Old Testament rituals of sprinkling blood, and washings, represented the future reality we now realize in Christ. Paul did not expect his readers to actually go to heaven and enter the "holy of holies" in the Temple in heaven! That is absurd! Nor did he mean to imply that they were at that time in the "holy of holies" in some mystical way! Rather, after painting the picture for his readers of the separation that existed between the individual

Jew and God under the old economy (because Christ had not atoned for their sins yet), he then asks his readers to "enter in" with him into the "holy of holies" metaphorically speaking. That is, they can draw near to God through Christ, WITHOUT these former obstacles, in a personal relationship not possible under the Old Covenant. Frost takes Paul's metaphor as being some kind of mystical (literal) reality. He thinks that he is right now in the mystical "holy of holies." And he welcomes you to his fog of "mysticism" if you think the same. Well, I hope that you are a bit more rational than that, and reject such nonsense as you reject the same kind of Roman Catholic "mysticism." Catholic "mysticism" says Jesus' actual blood and flesh become mystically present in the "host" as the priest blesses it and places it on your tongue!

Frost appeals for support to the long history of mysticism in the Church. True enough! Thanks to Catholicism, "mysticism" is actually mainstream. And the Reformers were nearly the "mystics" the Romanists were. But precedent in Church history is no indication that this is biblical Christianity. Mysticism is also the main ingredient of paganism, Gnosticism, New Age, Occultism, and the Eastern mystery religions. That it is found in Catholicism and Reformed theology merely means both of these need a good house cleaning. Mysticism is not sanctified by its usage in Christianity. Rather, Christianity (and a sound mind) is polluted and corrupted by mysticism.

Timing Issues

Hebrews 11 Once Again

Frost next cites Hebrews 11:39-40. *"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."* Frost claims that *"this is eschatology in the Bible in a nutshell."* But, Frost wrenches these verses out of their context and gives them a spin totally contrary to the context. Frost writes, *"What Israel ("they") was waiting for was the promise of perfection, or eternal life with God, reconciled completely, having their sins forgiven. Christ's blood effects this promise. He "became a minister to the circumcision (the Israelites) in order to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs" (Rom. 15.8)."* Where does Frost get this "expectation" of Israel from? Certainly not from the Old Testament. And certainly not from the context of this passage. Notice that Frost has implied that the the "promises" to the patriarchs in Hebrews eleven refers to *"the promise of perfection, or eternal life with God, reconciled completely, having their sins forgiven."*

However, Frost has completely disregarded the context, and inserted something not mentioned in the context. Hebrews eleven tells us precisely what "they" were waiting for, and what "promise" Paul was speaking about. *"By faith Abraham, **when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance**, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the **land of promise**, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of **the same promise**: ... These all died in faith, not having received **the promises**, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."* (Heb 11:8-9,13). **Note that the "promise" is the**

Abrahamic Covenant. The land, from the Nile river in Egypt, to the Euphrates river in Iraq, was PROMISED to Abraham and his seed forever (Gen. 15:18). Abraham left Ur in Iraq, and went to dwell in the land that he would afterward receive for his eternal inheritance. Isaac, Abraham's son, and Jacob his grandson, also lived in the "*promised land*" as strangers and pilgrims. After Abraham died, God appeared to Isaac, and confirmed the Abrahamic Covenant with him, giving him the "promise" also, (Gen. 26:2-3). Later, God appeared to Jacob after Isaac's death, and confirmed the same covenant and promise with him, (Gen. 28:13-14 & 48:4). All three "promises" (to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) came from the lips of God, and all three concern the same thing, Israel's possession of the land forever along with the patriarchs. These are the ONLY "promises" in the context of Hebrews 11. In this context, Paul wrote, "*these all, having obtained a good report through faith, **received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect***" (vss. 39-40). How can Frost wrench these verses from the context of Hebrews 11, which clearly defines the "promise," and interpret it as something mystical? This is a good illustration of Frost's arbitrary interpretive method. It is also a good object lesson for you regarding why a consistent interpretive principle is necessary. The Jewish believers reading this Epistle most certainly understood the "promise" in Heb. 11:39-40 as the Abrahamic Covenant, since it is specifically mentioned in the text. They did NOT understand the "promise" to be something mystical. Dispensationalists are the ones who seek to employ the grammatical historical method consistently, and who value the context. (Of course, this ideal is not always realized, and many dispensationalists do not achieve this goal in practice. Progressive Dispensationalism is an attempt to stick to the plan, and take this goal beyond the sacred cows that Traditional Dispensationalists are unwilling to reexamine).

Frost cited Rom. 15:8, that Jesus Christ "*became a minister to the circumcision in order to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs.*" But, what are those promises made to the "patriarchs," Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? One need only look up the passages I cited in Genesis to see that they are LAND inheritance promises! Where can Frost find the kinds of mystical promises in the historical accounts of God's dealings with the Patriarchs? In Rom. 15:8, Paul was NOT saying that some kind of mystical fulfillment of these promises is to be realized by the Patriarchs. He was saying that the eventual fulfillment of the actual land inheritance promises would come to Israel because of Christ. That is, it was necessary for Christ to come BEFORE Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the twelve tribes of Jacob could actually "*receive the promises.*" And in Hebrews 11:39-40, Paul stated plainly that his Jewish readers, and the Patriarchs and OT Jewish saints who died in faith, will receive the promised inheritance together as a group!

The Kingdom Presently Realized?

Frost next seeks to prove that the readers of Hebrews were AT THAT TIME receiving the fulfillment of the promises. This would necessarily require a mystical fulfillment rather than the actual land inheritance. Frost writes, "*Therefore, since we are (present tense) receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful' (12.28). Okay, let's get this straight: the first generation of Christian Jews claimed that they were "receiving the kingdom" (paralambano is the Greek word for 'receiving'). Why would they make this claim at that time shortly before A.D. 70?*" Frost points out that the verb

"paralambano" (receiving) is in the present tense. By this he seeks to prove that the Hebrew Christians were at that time in the process of "receiving" the fulfillment of the promises, ie., the Kingdom. But, Frost overlooked two very important things.

First, it is common in the Greek New Testament for the speaker or writer to use the present tense for emphasis, even when he is speaking of the past or future. Even beginner Greek students understand that the present tense verbs in Greek are used in a variety of ways. **The verb tense primarily indicates the KIND of action, with the TIME of action being only a minor component**, and is usually inferred from the context. The standard, well-known grammar by Dana and Mantey lists eight uses of the present tense. Included among these are **"the customary present."** This use of the present tense denotes something that may be expected to occur. Also included among these is **"the historical present"** which, as the name implies, refers to something that actually occurred in past time. The reason for using it in a context where the action is obviously past is to add vividness to the narrative. The "historical present" is frequently used even in English. Listen to your local news, or read the newspaper, and you will hear the reporters speaking of things that recently occurred (past) using present tense verbs. For example, how about this headline: *"The Tampa Bay Bucs **come** from behind and **win** the superbowl!"* Another common use of present tense verbs listed by Dana and Mantey is the **"futuristic (or prophetic) present."** This usage is very common in prophetic passages. According to Dana and Mantey, *"This use of the present tense denotes an event which has not yet occurred, **but which is regarded as so certain** that in thought it may be contemplated as already coming to pass."* According to Winer, it is *"employed to denote a future action either because it is already **firmly resolved upon** or because **it follows because of some unalterable law.**"* And according to Robertson, *"The other use of the futuristic present is the dramatic or prophetic. This present - a sort of counterpart to the historic present - **is very frequent in the predictions of the N.T.** It is not merely prophecy, but **certainty of expectation** that is involved. As examples note Matt 17:11; 24:43; 26:2; 26:18; 27:63; Luke 3:9; 19:8; John 4:35; 8:14; 8:21; 10:15; 12:26; 20:17; 21:23; 1 Cor 15:26... **The futuristic present startles and arrests attention. It affirms and not merely predicts. It gives a sense of certainty.**"* (All bold and underlining mine - TW). So, from a grammatical standpoint, the present tense in this passage does NOT necessarily indicate they were currently receiving the Kingdom.

Second, Frost's ignores the context which is clearly prophetic. His reliance on the present tense in this passage as proof that the Jewish believers were already receiving the Kingdom is NOT consistent with the normal usage of the present tense Greek verbs in prophetic contexts, as Dana, Mantey, Winer, and Robertson stated in the above quotes. Let's take a look at the context of the verse Frost cites.

Heb 12:25-29

25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

*26 Whose voice **then** shook the earth: but now **he hath promised**, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.*

27 And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

28 Wherefore we **receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved**, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

29 For our God is a consuming fire.

(KJV)

It is obvious Paul was speaking prophetically. The great "shaking" was still future (promised). Even Frost, as a preterist, must interpret the great shaking as future. He would associate it with the destruction of Jerusalem, while dispensationalists associate it with the future great tribulation and parousia of Christ. Either way, it was future from the perspective of Paul and his readers. And it is also clear that the "Kingdom" would be received by his readers after the great "shaking." Therefore, the present tense "receiving" (paralambano) does not indicate a current situation, but an anticipated one. Frost cannot have it both ways. If he wants to insist that the present tense "receiving" means that they were already receiving the Kingdom, then the coming of the Kingdom cannot be associated with the destruction of Jerusalem which was still future from the perspective of writer and reader even in a preterist scenario. The fact is, Paul commonly used the present tense for emphasis of things that were CERTAIN. And this is no exception. It is very obvious from the context that the **absolute certainty** of the future fulfillment was Paul's emphasis, and NOT that it was occurring at that time, as Frost would have you believe. That we will receive the Kingdom according to God's promise was the certainty in which Paul wanted his readers to fix their hope.

The Kingdom "at hand"

Frost next appeals to Jesus' statement, "*Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.*" In doing so, he indicates that the Kingdom must have come shortly thereafter, or it could not have been "at hand" at that time. But, "*at hand*" (eggizo) is commonly used two ways in Scripture. It can mean either **near in TIME** or **near in LOCATION** (cf. Luke 7:12, 12:33, 15:1, 15:25, 18:35, 18:40, 19:29, 19:37, 19:41, 22:47, 24:15, 24:28, etc.). Jesus' words do not necessarily indicate that the Kingdom was about to be established on earth in fulfillment of OT prophecy. The language PERMITS that understanding, but does not require it. It is just as possible that Jesus meant that the Kingdom had drawn near to the Jews in proximity. Remember, Jesus is "*the Christ, the King of the Jews.*" That is, the Jewish Messiah. Preterists and A-millennialists think that the Kingdom was about to be inaugurated in some mystical sense. Traditional Dispensationalists think that Jesus was actually offering the physical Kingdom to Israel at that time, but that the timing of its inauguration was postponed because of the nation's unbelief. But, as a Progressive Dispensationalist, I believe neither of these is correct. The Kingdom was "near" (in proximity) in the sense that Jesus Himself, as King, was present with them as the embodiment of the Kingdom. The Kingdom is wherever Christ the King is. The authority, glory, and power of the Kingdom flows from His own person. Therefore, when the crowd of Scribes and Pharisees surrounding Jesus demanded that He produce His Kingdom visibly if He was really the Messiah, Jesus replied, "*the Kingdom of God is [now] in your midst*" (Luke 17:21). When Jesus sent the disciples out two by two to the towns and villages in Israel, commanding them to heal the sick, cast our demons, cleanse the lepers,

and raise the dead, He told them to say, "*the Kingdom of God **has come** near to you*" (Luke 10:9). In other words, the Kingdom of God actually passed through their towns as the disciples came through demonstrating the power of the Kingdom with the miraculous signs. Such statements indicate that the Kingdom's nearness was in **proximity rather than timing of its inauguration on earth**. But, Jesus also went back to heaven, leaving Israel with no Kingdom. "*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, **your house is left unto you desolate**. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*" (Matt 23:37-39). The fact is, the Kingdom **VISITED** Israel for three years in the person of Christ. This was **the time of Israel "VISITATION"** (Luke 19:44). Thayer's defines this word as "*investigation, inspection, visitation.*" But, Christ was not crowned the King of the Jews, taking His place on the Throne of David at that time. Other things needed to be accomplished according to the sovereign plan of God first. The Messiah first had to offer Himself as the "*Lamb of God*" to take away the sins of the world. And the good news of the Kingdom needed to be spread to all the far off nations. Progressive Dispensationalists do not deny that the Kingdom of God was NEAR when Jesus came. Our disagreement with both Preterists, A-millennialists, and even traditional Dispensationalists, is over **nearness in proximity vs. nearness in the timing of its full establishment on earth**. Since the "*at hand*" passages relating to the Kingdom can be interpreted grammatically either way, this cannot prove Frost's point, which requires that Jesus meant exclusively that the Kingdom was about to come in its full implementation almost immediately. And in my opinion, the passages that speak of the Kingdom as already present in Jesus' day prove that proximity was the issue rather than timing. It could not be spoken of in future commencement both as being "near" and "present" at the same time.

Daniel Identifies the Time of the Kingdom's Arrival

Frost appeals to Daniel's vision in Dan. 7 as proof that the Kingdom would come during the Roman Empire. But, Daniel's visions in chapter 7ff are supplemental to the general outline given first, and most comprehensively, in chapter 2. The great image, with the head of gold, was the Babylonians. The chest of silver was the Persians. The belly of brass was the Greeks led by Alexander the Great. The two legs of iron represented the Roman Empire, which was divided into eastern and western empires 300 years after Christ. Finally, the feet of mixed clay and iron represented another kingdom following the Roman empire. The feet had ten toes, which are **ten kings reigning simultaneously**. Daniel prophesied plainly that "*in the days of **these kings** shall the God of heaven set up a Kingdom...*" (Dan. 2:44). That Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome follow sequentially is clear from history. Therefore, the historic pattern indicates that the feet and toes must follow after the Roman Empire which is represented by the legs of iron. This means that the final kingdom (the feet with 10 toes) must come after the fall of Rome and BEFORE Christ's Kingdom is established on earth. Notice that it is while ALL 10 kings (toes) are reigning that the Kingdom is set up, overthrowing all 10 at once. Therefore, the 10 kings are simultaneous rulers within a single conglomerate kingdom, the kingdom of Antichrist. Daniel 7 adds more specific information to the prophetic outline in Dan. 2. But it does NOT contradict it. Daniel 7 does NOT say or

indicate in any way that the Kingdom of God comes during the reign of Rome as Frost claims. It merely puts the arising of the Antichrist after Rome. How soon is not specified. Frost made a huge error by citing Dan. 2. He writes, "But, what does Daniel "see" during this reign? First off, in Dan. 2.44 we find, "in the days of those kings (of the fourth empire), the God of heaven will establish his kingdom.'" But, notice that Frost inserted in brackets something that is not stated or implied in the text at all! It is clear from the context that the 10 kings are not a part of the legs of iron, but of the feet of iron mixed with clay. Notice, in all the rest of the kingdoms described, each is represented by a specific substance: gold, silver, brass, iron, and iron-clay mixture. Also, each are represented by a section of the body: head, chest, belly, legs, and feet. Frost is trying to make the feet into the legs. Wrong! They are a different body part, and a different substance. To interpret this consistently, the feet with the ten toes MUST be a separate kingdom that follows after the Roman Kingdom declines from world dominance, just as the other kingdoms followed after the decline of each previous kingdom in history. Frost is fudging his evidence to make it favor his preterist timing.

Frost writes, "The "time" had "drawn near" and the "kingdom of God" was "at hand" when Jesus preached during "the days of those kings" **of the fourth Roman Empire**. The saints during those days were promised to "receive the kingdom." The author of Hebrews wrote that they WERE receiving the kingdom that cannot be shaken! When? "During the days of THOSE KINGS" (bold mine). But his error is obvious! What ten kings were reigning in AD70? The Kingdom is specifically said to come "in the days of these [ten] kings." All ten must be alive and reigning when the Kingdom comes. Preterists usually try to make the succession of Roman Emperors between Christ's birth and AD70 as the "ten kings" even though there are 12 of them. But, all except Vespasian were already dead in AD70. The "time of the end" in Daniel and Revelation cannot be before Rome's division into eastern and western empires (the 2 legs) during the reign of Constantine some 300 years after Christ. Nor could it be prior to the decline of Rome's dominance, and the rise of the last kingdom represented by the feet, with the 10 simultaneously reigning kings. That these 10 kings reign simultaneously is also proven from Revelation. "The ten horns which you saw are **ten kings** who have received no kingdom as yet, **but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast**. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. **These [10 kings] will make war with the Lamb**, and the Lamb **will overcome them** [the 10 kings], for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful" (Rev 17:12-14). Notice that NONE of the ten kings had reigned when John wrote Revelation, making the preterist interpretation impossible. And again in Rev. 19. "And I saw the beast, the **kings of the earth**, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army" (Rev. 19:19). There is no question that the 10 kings in Revelation 17 are the 10 kings in Daniel 2. All 10 will be alive when Jesus returns, and will make war against Him at the Battle of Armageddon. Therefore, Frost is simply wrong to conclude that the 10 kings are a part of the old Roman Empire. It simply will not fit with the historical facts. And if the 10 kings reigning simultaneously are not to be found in history, then neither is the setting up of the Kingdom of the God of heaven, which Daniel said would be **in the days of these ten kings**, and the Beast to whom they give their power according to John.

Frost also pointed out that Daniel was told to seal the prophecy, and that it was for the time of the "end." True, but why does Frost not continue in the next couple of verses where Daniel was told the exact numbers of days between the "*abomination of desolation*" and when Daniel would be resurrected to receive his inheritance? The angel told Daniel that it would be 1290 days between these two events! The resurrection and inheritance of the Jewish saints would be 1290 days after the abomination. That is 3.5 solar years. How does that fit the preterist model, which puts the defiling of the Temple in AD70? That would put the resurrection in AD73!

Frost asks why Daniel is told to seal the book, but John was told not to seal Revelation. That question must first be answered by asking what is meant by sealing the book? Surely, it does not mean the book could not be read. It means the understanding of the meaning of the book was hidden. But, hidden from whom? The answer is it was, and still is, hidden from Daniel's people the Jews, and will be so until "*the time of the end.*" Daniel is a Jewish book, written to the nation of Israel (cf. Dan. 10:14, 12:1). As such, it contains prophecy that center's around Israel. Everything else is seen in how it relates to Israel. Revelation is the Christian counterpart to the Jewish book of Daniel. The truths of Daniel were, and continue to be, hidden from Israel because they do not believe Jesus Christ. Jesus is the one who revealed the meaning of Daniel for Christians. The Olivet Discourse is largely a commentary explaining Daniel. Jesus referenced Daniel at least three times in Matt. 24. The most obvious reference is Matt. 24:15, where Jesus referred to the "*abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the Prophet.*" The very next words uttered by Jesus were, "*let the reader understand.*" That is, let the Christian reader understand the book of Daniel based on Jesus' exposition. That the Jews did not accept Jesus' commentary on Daniel is obvious from Luke 21. Jesus predicted the destruction of Jerusalem, as well as the end-time tribulation. But the Jews did not heed Jesus' warning to flee the city when the Romans came, and were largely destroyed. This gives you an idea of the value the Jews put on Jesus' teaching. Daniel was, and will continue to be, "sealed" to the Jewish nation "*until the time of the end.*" However, Christians are among those whom Jesus expects to understand, as He said in Matt. 24:15. Therefore, when Revelation was given through John, its perspective is global (all nations), not limited to national Israel. It was meant for the Gentiles, being addressed to the seven churches of Asia Minor. Revelation is not sealed for Christians who can have a right perspective on prophecy, if we approach the Word of God in reverence.

Frost's next mistake is to claim that the unsealing of Revelation was done by Christ in releasing the 7 seals of Rev. 6. Frost writes, "*Was it "unsealed" by the "lamb of God" in Rev. 7? Yes sir, definitely. Was John told not to seal it up? Yes. Why? "Because the TIME is AT HAND."*" But, Frost is assuming what he is trying to prove here. Revelation 6 depicts Christ opening the seven - sealed scroll. There is nothing to suggest that this scroll was the book of Daniel, or Revelation. John was told at the very end of Revelation not to seal the prophecy of the book. How then would it be sealed in order for Jesus to break the seven seals? And Daniel's prophecy is not in view at all in this passage. Frost is reaching, and offering an explanation that makes no real sense, and has no support from the context. The vision of Christ's breaking the 7 seals was a prophecy of the future. Christ did not actually break 7 seals of the scroll at the time John saw the vision. Therefore, even in a preterist scenario, and even if we grant for the sake of argument

that Revelation was written before AD70 (which the historical data refutes), John's being told not to seal the book would have been before AD70. So, what was "sealed" that Christ allegedly opened in AD70? Frost probably would say the prophecies of Daniel. But, how does one arrive at that conclusion from the context? The seven-sealed scroll contains a series of judgments, none of which are stated in Daniel. There is simply no legitimate reason to connect the sealing of Daniel with the breaking of the seals in Revelation.

The Identity of Mystery Babylon

Frost's next mistake is to wrongly identify Babylon the Great — the woman riding the Beast — as Jerusalem. How does he come to this conclusion? He cites Rev. 11:8, "*Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.*" What is the connection between Jerusalem in chapter 11, and the city in Rev. 17? Nothing except both are called a "great city." Yet, Frost's argument hangs on these being the very same city. What reasons do we have for concluding that they are not the same city? Plenty! Mystery Babylon in Rev. 17 is specifically said to be seated on seven hills. Rome was known the world over by this title. Jerusalem has never been known by this title. Mystery Babylon was specifically said to be "*that great city that reigneth over the kings of the earth.*" Rome was the only city on earth that could make such a claim in the first century. Jerusalem was not even reigning over itself (the nation of Israel), never mind any other kings. Jerusalem was under Roman domination and control. The "king" of Judea was a Roman, and served at the pleasure of the Roman Emperor. Furthermore, the description of the destruction of Mystery Babylon indicates that it was a city rich because of trade by sea. Jerusalem was NOT a rich or luxurious city. And it was not anywhere near the sea. Rome, on the other hand, had the world's largest seaport, and was the richest city. The expression "*all roads lead to Rome*" referred to the trade routes established by Rome, because it was the hub of all merchant activity in the first century. Also, Rev. 18:20 indicates that the blood of the Apostles and prophets were shed there. But, the "prophets" here are not the OT prophets, but the NT prophets. The expression, "Apostles and prophets" is a New Testament term referring exclusively to New Testament characters (cf. Rev. 18:20 & Eph. 2:20, 3:5). Rome was the center of persecution of Christians, most severely under the reign of Nero in the '60s, and then Domitian in the '90s. The Apostles Peter and Paul both died in Rome. John himself was boiled in oil by Rome, but survived. He was then banished to Rome's "Alcatraz," the prison island of Patmos. All of the Apostles were persecuted by Rome, and all were killed by Rome except John. Even James, who was killed in Jerusalem, was not killed by the Jews, but by the Roman King Herod (Acts 12:1-3). NONE of the Apostles were killed by the Jews. All the Apostles who were martyred were killed by Rome, "*that great city that reigneth over the kings of the earth.*" Therefore, when she is judged, the Bible says that "*God hath avenged you [Apostles] on her*" (Rev. 18:20).

Finally, the early Church Fathers, who lived in these times, held that Mystery Babylon was Rome. There is even strong Biblical evidence that Rome's nick-name among Christians was "Babylon" even before the destruction of Jerusalem. Peter wrote his first Epistle while in Rome. Yet, he closed the Epistle by saying, "*the church that is **at Babylon**, elected together with you, saluteth you*" (1 Pet 5:13). There was no historical

local church at the historic site of ancient Babylon, which at this time was simply ruins with a few shepherds grazing their flocks there. And there is no record of Peter ever going so far east. Peter simply referred to the church in Rome as the church in "Babylon." Why would he do so unless his readers were familiar with Rome as "Babylon" in early Christian jargon.

The importance of the identity of "Mystery Babylon" should not be underestimated. The whole preterist interpretation hangs on this. Yet, if Rome is Mystery Babylon, preterism is impossible, because Rome has never been destroyed, certainly not before AD70. Of course, the preterist will likely claim that Rome has fallen as an empire, yet these prophecies were not fulfilled at that time. But, that is really not the case. Rome remains an empire to this day. The careful student of history knows that the Roman Empire morphed into "The Holy Roman Empire." It is today called the "Vatican." The emperors continued in succession; they are now called "popes." The rise of the Roman Catholic kingdom was really the "Christianizing" of the Roman Empire, beginning with the alleged conversion of Constantine. The "Church" (except a faithful remnant) merged with the Roman Empire. Roman Catholic theology became the means to subdue even more kings and masses of people, using religious control which is more effective by far than mere political control. Rome still rules today. She is the "harlot" because she takes the name of Christ while fornicating with every pagan and wicked thing imaginable. And her ruin is coming. She is to this day literally clothed in purple and scarlet, and gold. And throughout her history she has drunk from the cup of the blood of the saints. Rome is the city that will be destroyed — never to be inhabited again — according to Rev. 17-18. Jerusalem is destined for restoration.

Frost's Conclusion Regarding Timing

Based on all of the above Scriptures and the arguments given, Frost claims: *"What I have shown is the unequivocal testimony of Scripture as to WHEN the resurrection would occur, along with the receiving of the kingdom, along with being made perfect, along with the promised being confirmed, along with the status of sonship, the reconciled dwelling of God with man and man with God, the era of "righteousness" by faith, and the like. What I have done is this: since the Bible is quite "clear" as to WHEN the resurrection of the dead was to occur, then the general traditional opinion is in error on this matter. Rather than BEND the statements of the framework of the WHEN to fit the false notions of the TRADITION, I accuse the TRADITION of making a mistake, but must conform to the word of God. God's word never errs."*

But what has Frost actually proven? The reader can decide for himself. But, in my opinion, none of his above arguments prove anything except that he has misunderstood all of his proof texts, and given each a meaning not intended by the writer! Notice Frost's reasons for rejecting the plain sense of the "resurrection" passages that I used in my opening argument. His reasoning goes like this: Since the above arguments allegedly prove that the Kingdom of God was established on earth in the first century, he is now free to discount all of the Scriptures that deal with the NATURE of the resurrection. It is amazing to me that Frost claims *"God's word never errs"* and then proceeds to claim that the passages dealing with resurrection do not mean what they plainly say! The simple truth is that a consistent methodology of taking Scripture at face value will

explain BOTH the **TIMING** as well as the **NATURE** of prophetic events without having to strain the text. I believe I have shown the fallacies of Frost's biblical arguments for a first century fulfillment, as well as the logical fallacy of using a double standard regarding how one handles the Scriptures.

The Resurrection

Job 19:25-29

Frost found a couple of commentators, whom most of you have never heard of, claiming that they were "conservative." Then, he says that they thought Job did not refer to a resurrection of the body. But, where is his evidence? He does not even offer a quote from either, or a single reason why the passage does not speak of a future resurrection of the body! It is true that this passage has been challenged. But NOT on sufficient grounds. The controversy surrounds the words "*in my flesh*" in verse 26.

Job 19:25-27

*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!
(NKJ)*

Frost says, "*The most common interpretation is that Job was restored, his flesh was renewed, he did "see" God, and God did reward him in the end.*" Apparently, Frost is claiming that Job was not really referring to his own death when he said, "*after my skin is destroyed.*" I guess that was Job's way of saying that he was just sick. And Job's "seeing God" with his own eyes must have meant God's blessings on him after his recovery. But, if Job was referring to his present condition, of being covered with boils, why did he refer to his flesh being destroyed in the future? Why did he say that his own eyes will behold His Redeemer? And how could that be related to His Redeemer's standing in the latter day upon the earth? Job must have been quite the poet mystic if Frost is correct. Job's statements in the above verses are all perfectly consistent with each other if one takes them at face value. Job's Redeemer standing on the earth in the latter day was certainly the personal coming of Jesus Christ. Frost must deny this prophecy. Job said he would see His Redeemer with his own eyes, when He stands upon the earth in the latter day, after his flesh has been destroyed! Job was clear that his own eyes, and not another's, would behold His Redeemer standing upon the earth. None of this makes much sense unless Job was referring to the coming of Jesus Christ and a resurrection of the body. Of course many skeptics deny this plain declaration by Job. But, such skeptics should not be considered "conservative" when they do.

Isaiah 26:19-21

Again, Frost appeals to a note in the NIV that says "perhaps" this refers to a resurrection of the body, and also a couple of commentators who deny it. Once again, Frost gives us absolutely no logical reason to deny the normal meaning of the words. Frost mentioned the "context" but failed to prove from the context why the resurrection here is not literal. Let's take a look at the context.

First, most of chapter 26 is a song. Verse one begins with these words: *"In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah."* The song then proceeds from verse 1 through verse 18. This begs the question, what is "that day" referred to in verse 1? It is necessary to determine what day Isaiah meant here because it places the contents of this chapter within a historical timeline. Of course, "that day" has as its antecedent the "day" spoken about in chapter 25. This chapter speaks prophetically about the fall of Babylon, the battle of Armageddon, and the coming of Christ. It refers to the great feast on Mt. Zion (Jerusalem) in verse 6. Notice Paul actually quoted the first part of verse 8 in 1 Cor. 15:54. Paul was speaking of the resurrection there. And he stated that WHEN this mortal shall have put on immortality, THEN (at that time) this prophecy will be fulfilled, *"death is swallowed up in victory."* So, both Isaiah 25-26 and Paul's description of Christ's coming *"at the last trumpet"* and resurrection of the dead *"at His coming"* are tied together by Paul on the same day. Isaiah paints a picture of Christ's coming to earth and the restoration of Israel in chapter 25. Then, chapter 26 begins by saying that the following song will be sung in Judah on that very day -- the day of the resurrection, when *"death is swallowed up in victory."* The song proceeds through the next 18 verses. I suggest that you read it, because it deals with Israel's restoration. The very first line in this song refers to Jerusalem's restoration. *"We have **a strong city**; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in."* There can be no doubt that Israel's and Jerusalem's restoration is on view in both chapters. Verse 15 again refers to the land of promise, and God's finally expanding the borders according to the Abrahamic Covenant. *"You have increased the nation, O LORD, you have increased the nation; you are glorified; **you have expanded all the borders of the land.**"*

As stated earlier, the song ends in verse 18. We know this because the speaker changes from Israel (singing the song) to Isaiah's proclamation in verse 19. That is, verses 19-21 is Isaiah's inserted comment immediately after listing the lyrics to this song to be sung by Israel on "that day." Isaiah blurts out to Israel of his day: *"Your dead shall live! together with my dead body they shall arise! Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; for your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead!"* That this is not part of the lyrics of the song of Israel in "that day" is clear from the shift in both speaker (first Israel then Isaiah) as well as the tenses of the verbs (the song is sung in the past tense, but Isaiah's statement is in the future tense - a direct prophecy). This outburst of Isaiah's was no doubt brought on by the song's referring to all of Israel's dead oppressors who would not rise (Christ having destroyed them). *"O LORD our God, masters besides You have had dominion over us; but by You only we make mention of Your name. **They are dead, they will not live; they are deceased, they will not rise.** Therefore You have punished and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish"* (vss. 13-14).

Isaiah was encouraging his nation in a difficult time of its future hope, when God would restore the nation, the city of Jerusalem, defeat all her enemies, and establish His reign in the earth. This is when Israel's dead men will live. Together with Isaiah's dead body they will arise. Frost has no answer to this passage because it is clear and plain, when one considers the context. A vague note in the NIV or a couple of doubting Thomas commentators cannot overthrow the plain sense of the text.

Ezekiel 37:12-14

Frost says that *"this passage explicitly states that it is a spiritual metaphor for the "regathering of Israel".*" Yes, the valley of dry bones was a metaphor. But, the interpretation of the metaphor is plainly stated by Jehovah to Ezekiel. Frost is trying to make the EXPLANATION of the metaphor (God's explanation of the vision) into another metaphor! In other words, he does not accept the EXPLANATION of the metaphor by God to Ezekiel as being literal. In his thinking, Ezekiel saw a symbolic representation (the valley of dry bones), and then God's explanation to Ezekiel of what this represents was also itself symbolic of something else not specified in the text! After Ezekiel's seeing the vision of dry bones coming together, and new flesh coming upon them, and their reanimation, here is how Jehovah explained the vision to Ezekiel. He turned to Ezekiel and commanded him to tell Israel the following in light of this vision: *"Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, **I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD.**"* Notice that the promise is two-fold. It includes BOTH a resurrection from the dead AND a restoration to the land. It is NOT that the resurrection is a representation of the restoration to the land, as Frost would have you believe. The vision is supposed to represent BOTH the resurrection of the dead and the restoration of Israel at the same time, just as in Isaiah 25-26!

Frost has assigned a mystical interpretation to this passage, nowhere hinted at in the text. He says that "David" is Jesus in this prophecy! Why? Says who? The passage is speaking of resurrection of the dead INCLUDING King David. Why cannot David be a ruler over Israel in a resurrected body? Frost says that *"the "fleshly" throne on earth was merely a "type" of the "spiritual throne" in heaven upon which Jesus sat.*" Where does that come from? On what can Frost base such a conclusion? He continues: *"the day of Ezekiel had ALREADY ARRIVED and WAS ARRIVING through the Church, the Body of Christ, through which God dwelled with his people in peace through Christ's reconciling work at Calvary [sic]. This is what Ezekiel SAW."* Really? That is not what Jehovah said when He interpreted the vision for Ezekiel! He said it referred to the nation of Israel. He said that He would raise them from their graves, and restore them to the land of Israel.

Frost points out that the Spirit has already been poured out. He therefore concludes that this entire prophecy is past. But, Paul plainly stated that Israel's redemption was future from his day (after Pentecost), even though the nation of Israel was the enemy of the Gospel. At Pentecost, the Spirit was poured out only on a select few of Israel, the "Remnant." The future time of which Paul spoke, as well as Ezekiel, was when *"all Israel shall be saved"* (Rom. 11). But, notice the final statement of Jehovah to Israel regarding the fulfillment of this prophecy.

Ezek 37:21-28

*21 And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, **I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather***

them on every side, and bring them into their own land:

22 And I will make them one nation in the land **upon the mountains of Israel;** and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all:

23 Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: **so shall they be my people, and I will be their God.**

24 And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.

25 And **they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt;** and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.

26 Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.

27 **My tabernacle also shall be with them:** yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

28 And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.

(KJV)

Can you see the similarity between this passage and Hebrews 11? Both make it crystal clear that Israel's restoration will be according to the promise God made to the Patriarchs to inherit the land of Israel forever. **Both passages state plainly that the "land" is the very land in which the Patriarchs dwelled as pilgrims.** It cannot then be some mystical cosmic experience, as Frost would have you think.

Daniel 12:1-2

Frost claims that *"the burden of proof is on the person to demonstrate that actual "time" here is not the "normal sense" of the passage."* I agree. It is also on the one who claims that the NATURE of the events described is not the "normal sense" of the words. This very chapter tells us that there are 1290 days between the *"abomination of desolation"* and when Daniel himself would rise to receive his allotted inheritance. The word "lot" (KJV) in verse 13 is the normal Hebrew word used in many places in the Old Testament to refer to the division of the land by lot to the tribes of Israel.

Frost takes issue with the word "sleep" in verse 2, trying to show that because "sleep" is not literal, the resurrection here cannot be literal. But, what he fails to see is that "sleep" is a common metaphor for physical death in both Testaments. Paul used it of the saints who had passed away in 1 Thess. 4:14 & 1 Cor. 15:20, very likely relying on this very passage for precedent. That a particular term is a common figure of speech in no way nullifies the rest of the passage, making the whole thing non-literal. If that was the case, very little in Scripture could be taken at face value, because there are such metaphors on every page of Scripture. Neither Daniel nor Paul believed or taught "soul sleep." "Sleeping" is a metaphor for the dead body. And the whole reason the believer's body is

considered to be "sleeping" metaphorically is because it will rise again! It is the BODY alone that "sleeps" in the dust of the earth. The soul remains conscious in the presence of the Lord.

Frost has not given a single good reason to suppose that any of these Old Testament passages should be understood mystically. They all describe the NATURE of the resurrection. They also give the RELATIVE TIME of the resurrection, by tying it in to other prophesied events. The resurrection is tied to the restoration of Israel, the increasing of the borders of the land, the inheritance of the saints, and Israel's living in the land promised to the Patriarchs, in which they already dwelled as pilgrims (recorded in Genesis). Nothing about the timing of these events suggests a past fulfillment. Not one thing.

The Resurrection in the New Testament

Frost stated, *"Interestingly enough, Tim is a dispensationalist that believes in the "restoration of Israel" in the Millennium and that the "law" will be in full operation in order to be "literal" when it comes to interpreting Ezekiel 40-48. Here he says the "law" will not apply! He has shot himself in his own foot without realizing it! Will only "part" of the Law apply, Tim?"* This is another straw man argument. Apparently Sam Frost does not understand my position as a Progressive Dispensationalist. The Law was superseded by the New Covenant. It is never to be reinstated. But, that does not mean that everything related to the nation of Israel suddenly evaporates. Or that in the age to come there cannot be some things in common with the Law of Moses, such as a new Temple. Ezekiel tells us that only three of the seven Feasts of Israel will be celebrated in the coming age -- Passover, Pentecost, and Feast of Tabernacles. Jeremiah indicates that the Throne of the Lord will be in Jerusalem, and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) will not be done any more (Jer. 3:16). That some rituals or objects might be carried over into the age to come without the Law itself being carried over should not surprise anyone. That is precisely what occurred when the Law of Moses was fulfilled by Christ.

Many of the things commanded in the Law are also commanded of Christians who are now under "the Law of Christ," a new Torah that superseded the Torah of Mt. Sinai. Yet, the Law itself is not in force for us. The age to come will see some things brought forward from the beginning of time, the Law, and even this age in which we now live. It will be a new order, superseding the present dispensation, with a new Law going out from Jerusalem for the peoples of the earth. Some things will be in common with the Law of Moses, just as we now have some things in common with the Law of Moses. This does NOT mean in any sense that the Law of Moses will be reinstated. It will not.

John 5:28-29

In order to counter the force of this passage, Frost appeals to verses 24-25. *"Most assuredly, I say to you, **he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life**, and shall not come into judgment, but has **passed from death into life**. Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live."* I agree that Jesus was speaking metaphorically in these two verses of salvation. But the passage speaks of TWO distinct kinds of coming to life. The "living" of the "dead" in verses 24-25

is clearly a metaphor for salvation. Jesus said that the time for this was right then. People were believing on Him then, and He said they had passed from death unto life. But, He continued on to refer to two future resurrections. *"Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation."* Notice the difference in language. Here Jesus made it clear that He was referring to those who had actually been buried in the ground. A similar kind of statement can be found in the next chapter. *"And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day"* (John 6:40). And, *"Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day"* (John 6:54). Notice the two-fold "life" or "resurrection" in both of these verses.

Jesus said that those who believed on Him at that time possessed "everlasting life." But, He then made a distinct promise about their future. They (who already have everlasting life) ALSO will be **raised up** at the last day! Jesus repeated this promise several times in these two chapters. It is obvious then that Jesus spoke of both a metaphorical "resurrection" (salvation) followed by a literal "resurrection." They are NOT one and the same as Frost would have you think. Furthermore, if "resurrection" in verses 28-29 is also a metaphor as in verses 24-25, referring to salvation, then in what sense are the wicked to be raised at the resurrection of damnation? Is there a "damnation salvation?"

Frost claims that taking Jesus' words at face value creates an absurdity. He says, *"is that where we hang out, Tim, when we die? The "grave"?"* Well, yes and no. The body goes into the grave, but the soul goes to be with the Lord. The whole point of speaking of those in the grave is to make it unmistakably clear that He meant those who were physically dead, not merely dead as a metaphor for being "dead" in sins, as in the previous verses. There is nothing absurd about such a statement any more than referring to dead believers as "sleeping in Jesus." Both of these are clearly understood as common metaphors for the physically dead, and leave little room for misunderstanding.

1 Corinthians 15

Mr. Frost did not deal with my arguments from 1 Cor. 15 at all, but referred the reader to another website. Obviously, since I am not debating the author of that site I cannot comment. I hope at some point the discussion can come back to this very important chapter, because Paul demolishes the fundamentals of the preterist view of the resurrection in this passage.

Closing Remarks

Frost's last comments center around showing that Paul occasionally spoke of death and the body as a metaphor. True enough. But, it is wrong to suppose that because such things are used in a metaphorical way in one passage diminishes the same terminology in every other passage. Each passage must be understood within its own context. To borrow a metaphor from one passage, and then insert that metaphor in another passage because the same word is used is foolishness. What would happen if we did that with common speech? English would become unintelligible.

He continues by saying: "Tim's comparison of Jesus' resurrection to ours is an inference he makes, and does not cite any direct Scripture stating that "in the same way Jesus was raised, corpse and all, so shall we be raised." No Scripture like this exists. If one did exist this explicitly, then preterism falls immediately apart." But, such passage most certainly DO exist, and I cited them in my opening paper. For example:

1 Cor 15:20-23,42-44,49

*20 But now **Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.***

21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. ...

*23 But each one in his own order: **Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.***

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. ...

*49 **And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.***

That Christ's resurrection is the "firstfruits" of those who have died indicates the same KIND of resurrection. That this is what Paul meant is clear in verse 23. "*Christ the firstfruits, afterward they that are Christ's at His coming.*" Notice that being "made alive" in verse 22 refers to BOTH Christ (the firstfruits) as well as to "*them that are Christ's at His coming.*" The same verb "zwopoihthsontai" of which Christ is the "firstfruits" will be ours at His coming. It couldn't be any clearer that we will be raised from the dead in the very same sense that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. And that was ONLY bodily. Jesus was not raised from the dead in any manner except physically.

Notice also in verses 42-44 Paul states that the body is sown a natural body, but IT (the same body) is raised a "spiritual body." Keep in mind that "spiritual" does not mean immaterial, but of the Spirit of God. Christ's own body was sown a natural body, and raised a spiritual body. Paul clearly stated that it is this same body that was sown in corruption that is to be raised incorruptible.

Also, Phil. 3:20-21 stated plainly that when Jesus comes from heaven, He will change our lowly body and transform it into a body like His glorious body. Both of these passage state plainly what Frost has admitted would overthrow preterism.

Here is the bottom line. I have given you a list of several passages from both Testaments that speak of the resurrection of the bodies of believers from the grave when Jesus comes, and Israel is restored to their land. Frost must deny the plain sense of all of these passages, even though they all harmonize quite well together in their details when taken

at face value. **Both Testaments are united in their testimony.** Against this mass of evidence, Frost offers some passages that he claims pinpoint the timing of these events to the first century. I have shown that he has misinterpreted all of those passages dealing with timing. He therefore has no legitimate reason to deny the plain sense of all the resurrection passages. All of his attempts at justifying the mystical interpretation fail. If Frost is correct, then God is a cruel prankster. The Old Testament saints died with the wrong hope. They were fools to believe the actual promises of God, particularly in the Abrahamic Covenant. Israel is really the "Church." And nothing in Scripture is as it seems. If the promises of God cannot be relied upon, and God is not faithful to fulfill them **as stated** in Scripture (understood in the same way we understand normal speech), then Christianity is a farce in my opinion. And the Jewish Patriarchs were fools. Rather than Hebrews 11 being the great "Hall of Faith" it should be called the "Hall of Fools." The "hope" and "promises" Frost has assigned to them is nothing like what both this passage as well as the Old Testament historical data indicates.