

## The Problem of Ezekiel's Temple/City Vision Closing Statement

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Frost's initial strategy in this round was to construct a syllogism. First, he presented the main argument amillennialists use against premillennialists — the alleged impossibility of future sacrifices. This is supposed to prove to you that the Kingdom in Ezekiel is symbolic and cannot be literal. Based on this, he concludes (with no proof) that it is symbolic of the present age. Next Frost points out that premillennialists correctly place the Kingdom after the second coming of Christ. This is supposed to lead you the reader to conclude that preterism is true. His syllogism is as follows:

1. Amillennialists are correct — the Kingdom is allegorical and is here now.
2. Premillennialists are correct — the coming of Christ precedes the Kingdom.
3. Conclusion — Christ has already come.

Since Frost's second point (that Christ's coming precedes the Kingdom) is agreed upon by both preterists and premillennialists (but not amillennialists and postmillennialists), in this debate Frost thinks it necessary only to establish his first point in order to successfully argue his case against premillennialists.

In answering my point that his argument is not really against futurism, because it does no damage to amillennialism, Frost claims that amillennialists are inconsistent. It is true that amillennialism and preterism share an allegorical methodology when interpreting Old Testament prophecy. But that does not typically carry over into New Testament prophecy for the amillennialist. I agree with Frost that full preterists are much more consistent in the application of the allegorical hermeneutic. But, rather than this “consistency” indicating that preterists are superior exegetes, it could just as easily mean they have taken a bad methodology to absurd extremes! Frost has not demonstrated the validity of allegory as a methodology. He has offered no guidelines for its use, never mind shown that it should be consistently applied to Bible prophecy. He simply assumes his approach to be valid. His method is to attack literalism. That is, trying to show that a plain sense interpretation of Ezekiel's prophecy leads to what he considers an absurdity — future animal sacrifices.

### **Hermeneutics**

Frost charged me with failing to be consistent in interpreting the Old Testament literally. And I will be the first to admit that I do not always interpret Scripture in a rigid literal manner. But I do interpret Scripture using a consistent hermeneutical system, which can explain WHY certain portions of prophecy depart from the normal grammatical - historical pattern. Frost points to my claim that the “atonement” quality of the OT sacrifices was not inherent in the animal's blood, but was merely symbolic of Christ's atonement. And that “sin offerings” were called such, not because they actually took

away one's sins, but because they illustrated the cleansing from sin that the blood of Christ alone can accomplish. That is, these terms, as used in the Old Testament, were symbolic. My claiming this supposedly proves that I am not being consistent. But, this is perfectly consistent with my hermeneutical system, because it recognizes that such elements related to the Gospel were a part of the "mystery" hidden in the prophetic Scriptures. The perceived contradiction is in appearance only, because Frost apparently does not understand my methodology, nor the concept of *the revelation of the mystery* hidden in the prophetic Scriptures. So, let me explain.

A key element of Progressive Dispensationalism is the recognition that Old Testament prophecy includes a certain body of material called by Jesus and Paul, "*the mystery.*" This body of prophetic truth was "hidden" among the "prophetic Scriptures" (Rom. 16:25-26) so that it would not be discovered until the proper time. The elements of OT prophecy that have to do with the Gospel were all hidden using various techniques that depart from the normal grammatical – historical hermeneutic. For example, in Psalm 22, David appears to speak of his own sufferings, writing in the first person ("*they pierced **my** hands and **my** feet,*" &c.), defying the normal use of grammar. In Isaiah 53, the prophecies of Christ's sufferings are in the past tense as though they already occurred ("*He **was** wounded for our transgressions,*" &c), again defying the normal rules of grammar. In Peter's Pentecost sermon, he had to explain to his Jewish hearers why David's prophecy, "*you will not leave **my** soul in hades,*" did not refer to David, but to Christ. There are many other examples where prophecies related to Christ's atonement were hidden using similar grammatical devices. But, all these things were fully "revealed" in the New Testament. This is why I appealed to the explanation given in Hebrews regarding the quality of the Old Testament sacrifices. Paul explained there, in plain literal speech, the significance of the animal sacrifices regarding "atonement" and their total inadequacy in cleansing from sin. While the Torah, Prophets, and Psalms present the "mystery" of the Gospel still hidden, Hebrews (and the rest of the NT) presents the "mystery" revealed! Therefore, after the "*revelation of the mystery,*" we have new light shed on the Old Testament not possible while the "mystery" was still hidden in the "prophetic Scriptures." It is therefore perfectly consistent with Progressive Dispensationalism to understand the "atonement" sacrifices as merely symbols pointing to Christ. This in no way undermines my methodology regarding taking Scripture at face value. If anything, it shows that New Testament "revelation" MUST resolve all the prophetic issues of the Old Testament, based on what Jesus and the Apostles taught. In order for this to be so, we must take the New Testament prophetic teaching at face value. And that means literally, unless there is some obvious reason in the context for doing otherwise.

Some might suppose that employing this method would lead to amillennialism. But that is not so. That the Gospel was "hidden" in the Old Testament Scriptures using these devices requires another **contrasting hermeneutic** in the OT to be the "norm." In other words, the fact that the Gospel's prophetic elements were hidden using a special device — their not following the NORMAL grammatical and contextual rules of interpreting prophecy — demands that there be a contrasting normal process of conveying general prophecy. God *usually* employed the normal means of communicating His message to man (plain speech). But when He wanted to conceal the

“mystery” of the Gospel, He used a secondary (cryptic) means which served to camouflage the Gospel elements so that they would not be understood until the appropriate time of their “revelation.” Amillennialism does not make this distinction. It takes the fact that SOME Old Testament prophecies (related to the Gospel) do not follow the normal grammatical – historical hermeneutic as a license to abandon sound hermeneutics when interpreting any Old Testament prophecy. Preterism extends this license into the New Testament as well, greatly compounding the error, with disastrous results. In their attempt to be consistently allegorical, they run roughshod over some of the very fundamentals of the Christian Faith, such as the hope of the resurrection of the body, and even the Gospel itself.

### **Sacrifices Offered by Christians**

I pointed out in my rebuttal that the Apostles and other Jewish Christians continued to offer sacrifices at the Temple after Christ's atoning work. Based on this fact, I concluded that animal sacrifices are not inherently contrary to the Gospel Paul and the other Apostles preached. Frost countered my argument by claiming that the Old Covenant sacrificial system remained in place until AD70. He wrote that I am in agreement with this assertion. However, I am not in agreement with Frost on the essence of his argument. I do agree that the *outward form* continued from the time of Christ until the temple was destroyed in AD70. But, I do NOT agree with the key point on which Frost's argument rests. That is, the atoning work of Christ was not completed until AD70. The very passage Frost alluded to, Hebrews 8, proclaims that it was the coming of the New Covenant that made the Old Covenant “obsolete.” Paul wrote, “*In that He says, "A new covenant," He **has made** the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away*” (Heb. 8:13 NKJ). The Old Covenant was therefore “obsolete” from the moment of Christ's crucifixion, resurrection, and presentation of His own blood to the Father. Paul used the perfect tense, “has made,” meaning a completed action with continuing results. That it took a few more decades for all outward remnants of the Old Covenant to “vanish away” from observable sight in no way implies that Christ's atoning work was ongoing until AD70. The words “vanish away” are translated from a Greek word that means to disappear from view. In this context, it simply means the observable remnants of the Old Covenant will completely vanish from sight. It has nothing to do with the end of the Old Covenant itself. That had already been made obsolete by the coming of the New Covenant.

In order for Frost to condemn future animal sacrifices (which is the main thrust of this whole round in the debate), he must excuse the Apostles and early Jewish Church for their continued participation in these rituals. In order to do this, Frost has to stretch the atonement work of Christ over a forty year period, with its not being completed until AD70. So then, only after Christ's work of atonement was FINISHED (allegedly after AD70), is it then unthinkable for animal sacrifices to be offered. That means the Apostles, and the entire early Church were not yet “perfected” by Christ's atonement prior to AD70.

This concept puts Frost and all full preterists outside of Reformed theology (which he claims to embrace). And even outside of Christianity itself, in my opinion! If you thought that denying the resurrection of the body was serious error, this is nothing short of

heresy! The atoning work of Christ was already FULLY ACCOMPLISHED when Jesus sat down at the right hand of the Father after His ascension. This is what Christianity has always embraced from the Apostles until today.

In my rebuttal, I pointed to Hebrews 10 to show that animal sacrifices never had any quality that actually cleansed the worshipper from his sins. Frost flatly denies this, and claims that they did actually cleanse the worshipper from his sins, albeit not making him “perfect.” Frost writes, *“The blood of bulls and goats took away sins. But, guess what. The sins came back. And they would have to offer more bulls and goats. Then sins were forgiven and atoned for. Then, guess what, sins came back. They would have to offer more bulls and goats. Sins were forgiven. Then, guess what? Sins came back...and on and on and on it went. Such a system could not “perfect” the sinner.”* Yet, Paul flatly contradicted Frost’s statement. Paul began this chapter by stating that the symbols used in the sacrificial system were themselves not capable of cleansing from sin. Paul wrote, *“For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.”* Frost would have you believe that the “shadow” has the power to cleanse from sin, albeit a temporary cleansing. This was the same mistake the Judaizers made, and was the reason they insisted that the Gentiles must observe these things in order to be saved. Not so, says Paul. *“But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. **For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.**”* Paul indicated that animal blood has no power at all to cleanse the worshipper from his sins, period! Notice, it was **impossible** for animal blood to take away sins! Paul then went on to describe the only thing that does cleanse from sin, the offering of the body of Jesus Christ. Paul continues, *“By that will **we have been** sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”* The verb translated “have been sanctified” is in the perfect tense. This indicates an act completed in the past with continuing results. This statement completely demolishes the basis of Frost's argument. Paul wrote this before AD70. Yet, the offering of the body of Christ “once for all” had already perfected the early Christians long before AD70. There was no need to wait for the destruction of the Temple. Paul continued, *“And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly **the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.**”* Once again Paul stated plainly that animal sacrifices currently being offered at the Temple in Jerusalem had no power to take away sins. *“But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For **by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.**”* The verb “has perfected” is again in the perfect tense, indicating a past completed action with continuing results. This was written while the Temple was still standing, and animal sacrifices were still being offered. And, even while Jewish believers, to whom Paul wrote, were themselves still sacrificing at the Temple.

Frost cannot have it both ways! If the pre-AD70 Church was not yet “perfected,” and if the atonement was not yet complete, and this allegedly excuses Christian Jewish continued participation in animal sacrifices, then how can Paul say that they had already been “perfected forever” by Christ? But if they were already “perfected forever” by Christ before AD70, yet the Jewish believers still offered sacrifices at the Temple without

condemnation from the Apostles, there can be no inherent contradiction if animal sacrifices are offered again in the age to come!

### **Jesus' Future Celebration of the Passover**

Jesus Himself, at the Last Supper, plainly stated that He would eat the Passover again with His disciples in His Kingdom. *"Then He said to them, 'With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God'"* (Luke 22:15-16 NKJ). The "Passover" was the Jewish festival where the sacrificial lamb was offered and eaten by the worshippers. When Jesus said, *"eat this Passover"* He was referring to their physically consuming the sacrificial lamb right there before them on the table. It is not possible to *"eat the Passover"* without an animal sacrifice. Jesus did not predict the cessation of the Passover forever. Rather, He indicated an intervening period of time when He would not partake of the Passover. This implies an eventual resumption of the very same "Passover" at some point in the future. No doubt, preterists will claim that this refers to some mystical "Passover" not involving the sacrificing of a literal lamb. But such an interpretation is forbidden by the context. *"This Passover"* refers to the Lamb they were actually consuming when Jesus spoke these words. Yet, *"no longer eat of it until"* indicates a pause, then a resumption of the very same activity ("it" has as its antecedent the "Passover" previously mentioned). The Passover meal also included consuming four cups of wine at different intervals during the supper. *"Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes'"* (vss. 17-18 NKJ). Jesus' statement is perfectly consistent with the premillennial understanding of Ezekiel's prophecy, but flatly contradicts Frost's preterism. Jesus will again partake of the Passover supper in the Kingdom with His disciples, including the wine and the sacrificial lamb. To say that there will be no more Passover is to flatly contradict Jesus Himself.

### **The End of the Mosaic Law**

Frost seems to have missed my point regarding Ezekiel's vision not being according to the Law of Moses, but a new dispensation that will have some things in common with the Law of Moses. I pointed out that under the Law of Moses, no deviation was permitted. Frost writes, *"Then why did Paul deviate? Was he following prophecy?"* The point is, the Law had already become "obsolete." That is why the Apostles did not follow it, or suppose that it had any jurisdiction over them. Frost wrote, *"Let me get this straight. The Law allowed for no deviation, but the prophecies state that there would be deviation. I smell Preterism!"* No, no, no! The point is that in the age to come the Law is not reinstated, but animal sacrifices will be offered apart from the Law of Moses, not according to the Law of Moses.

Frost cites Matthew 5:18 in support of the Law departing. He writes, *"When did Jesus say that 'jots and tittle' would depart? 'When heaven and the Land' depart."* This is not at all what Jesus said! In the context Jesus was speaking of *"the law and the prophets,"* not merely *"the Law"* (Old Covenant) as Frost interprets the passage. This is a huge distinction. Jesus' terminology refers to the *Old Testament Scriptures*, not to *the Law of Moses*. It had nothing to do whatever with the end of the Old Covenant. It had to do

with the perfect fulfillment of the prophecies found within the Old Testament Scriptures, being fulfilled to the letter! Until the passing of heaven and earth, everything prophesied in *“the law and the prophets”* (the common name for the Hebrew Bible) would come to pass exactly as prophesied.

### **Another Bogus Syllogism:**

Frost writes, *“If the Law of Moses demanded obedience to the letter and Ezekiel's prophecy departed from the Law of Moses, and Paul departed from the Law of Moses, then Paul must have been living in the times when the departures from the Law of Moses was being fulfilled. Therefore, Paul must have been living when Ezekiel's visions were being fulfilled.”* Frost's syllogism is constructed as follows:

1. Ezekiel's prophecy shows a clear departure from the Law of Moses
2. Paul shows a clear departure from the Law of Moses
3. Conclusion — *“Paul must have been living when Ezekiel's visions were being fulfilled.”*

Frost's conclusion does not logically follow. It is about as valid as the following syllogism:

1. A Buick is not a Dodge
2. A Ford is not a Dodge
3. Conclusion – A Ford is a Buick

That two things are both different from a third thing does not mean the first two are the same. Frost does not take into account the possibility of an intervening dispensation between the Law of Moses and Ezekiel's prophecy. His syllogism is therefore invalid, and proves nothing except that Frost is using illogical arguments to support his position.

### **Another Goof**

Frost wrote, *“The logic of Warner's position reveals that he has shot himself in the foot. Paul himself quotes Ez 37.27 in II Co 6.17. This was becoming the reality.”* See for yourself that Paul was not quoting Ezekiel 37:27 in 2 Cor. 6:17. In verse 16 Paul was quoting Lev. 26:12. And in verse 17 he was quoting Isaiah 52:11. Furthermore, Paul did not indicate that the promises in these verses were already realized. Rather, he said immediately afterward, *“Having therefore these **promises...**”* indicating that the realization of what was promised was something for which they still hoped for in anticipation.

### **Frost's True Colors**

Frost writes, *“Warner still **childishly** insists that Jerusalem here means Jerusalem over there in Israel located on dirt. Paul, on the other hand, noted that Jerusalem "above" is the "mother of us all." Is that not that "throne of the LORD"? Does God "dwell in temples made by hand"? Yet, Warner still **pharisaically** sees a time when Jesus will dwell on a concrete slab on dirt in the **U.N. designated land of Israel.**”* (bold mine)

1. Apparently, it is “childish” to think that the Bible actually means what it says, even when a literal interpretation makes perfect sense, and is consistent with the rest of Scripture.
2. Apparently, expecting God to actually keep His promise to Abraham makes one a “Pharisee” in Frost’s estimation.
3. Apparently, the nation of “Israel” has nothing to do with the promises of God, but owes its existence to the United Nations. That is about as logical as saying that Israel after the exodus owed its existence to Pharaoh. Or, Israel after the Babylonian captivity owed its existence to Cyrus, king of Persia.

### **Agonizing, Horrific, Misinterpretation of Heb. 10:26-29**

Frost writes, *“This is the context of Hebrews 10. ‘If we (Jews) continue to sin after we have received the knowledge of the truth (Jesus), then no sacrifice for sins are left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and raging fire that will consume the enemies of God (A.D. 70).’ The writer goes on: to continue in the Law of Moses and offer sacrifices will lead to trampling the blood of Christ and insulting the Spirit. This is how it is in our day. To insist today that we offer sacrifices would be to insult God. For a time, it was permitted, but not now.”* This has got to be the most bizarre interpretation of this passage I have ever heard! It is a classic case of reading one’s own ideas into the text. It has nothing to do with continuing to offer animal sacrifices. Nor does it have anything to do with AD70! It has to do with forsaking the New Covenant that was established by Christ. Frost has already admitted that the Jewish Christians continued to offer sacrifices, and that even Paul himself did so many years after Christ died. Nothing in the context suggests that the *“fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries”* was the AD70 war. Has Frost also abandoned the idea of eternal punishment? The point of Paul’s warning was that punishment for abandoning the Mosaic Covenant was death. But the punishment for abandoning the New Covenant was far worse. Frost’s interpretation is not only bizarre, it is utterly impossible. How could this be a warning against continuing to offer animal sacrifices after AD70 if the Temple was destroyed and the priesthood dispersed in AD70? The destruction of the Temple itself precludes any sacrifices being offered so long as there is no Temple! It is not possible to offer sacrifices without a Temple and priesthood! Furthermore, how could the punishment precede the crime? If Frost’s interpretation is correct, then Paul would be warning them not to offer sacrifices after AD70 (because according to Frost, it was still OK to do so up until AD70). Yet, they could not do so if they wanted to, because it is impossible without a Temple and priesthood! So, in effect, Paul was warning them not to do what would be utterly impossible to do! Secondly, the punishment for doing this impossible crime was to be destroyed in the wrath of God in the AD70 war (before it was even a crime to do so). This punishment is supposed to be for what certain hypothetical Jews would do **after** AD70, according to Frost. If the “fiery indignation” that will devour the adversaries is the AD70 war, how could those being punished have committed the crime, which is only actually a crime after AD70?

The true interpretation of this passage is clearly referring to Jewish believers abandoning the New Covenant at that time (even while the Temple was still standing). Yet, at the same time, the Apostles did not forbid the Jewish believers from participating in the Temple worship! Clearly, offering animal sacrifices was not the issue at all. Rather,

the abandonment of the Gospel of Christ was the issue. This is no different than Paul's other Epistles, where he castigated the Judaizers for imposing the Law on the Gentiles, yet at the same time participated in the Jewish sacrifices himself! There is no inherent conflict between the two, because the issue was obligation to the Law, not voluntary observance of certain rituals.

Frost cited many other phrases pulled out of their contexts and strung together. To address each pasted phrase in its biblical context would take many more pages. Suffice it to say that these are just more of the same kind of interpretation demonstrated in his treatment of the above passage.

### **Conclusion:**

Frost concludes his remarks with these words: *"Folks, the issue is solved if we think outside the "traditional" box and realize that we have "every spiritual blessings" in Christ and that all the promises are "yes and amen" in Christ and that we serve God "day and night in his temple." Let's live like that. Let's demonstrate to the world that reality. Let us, once again, turn this world upside down by truly showing from Scriptures a true alternative universe in King Jesus, Ruler of all things and all peoples!"*

Am I the only one who finds it odd that Frost believes Christians living before AD70 were not yet "perfected," and did not yet possess the realization of the promises? Yet, he likes to misapply excerpts from passages that refer specifically to that time (before AD70) and apply them to our day! In the above quote, Frost cites Paul's "every spiritual blessing" from Eph. 1:3. *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who **has** blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."* Notice Paul used the aorist tense, indicating a past event. Yet, Frost is using this out of context excerpt to imply that we only have these things after AD70, in contrast to those living before AD70. In doing so, Frost implies that the passage was not actually true for those to whom it was written, but is true for us now living after AD70. Likewise, he cites 2 Cor. 1:20, as though it applied to us now, but not to the ones to whom it was actually written! *"For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us."* I have found that Frost does this constantly. It serves to demonstrate his methodology which is at best arbitrary.