

The Personal, Bodily, Second Coming Christ Rebuttal

Samuel Frost 01-26-04
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It's hard to know where to begin. The first article of this "round" left me laughing, and at the same time greatly insulted. Let me pick on the part that left me laughing, first.

Tim concludes his article by quoting Ignatius (30-107 A.D.). He states that he was a "disciple of John." Notice that he gives no quote for that assertion. If the reader did not know the controversy surrounding what we know of Ignatius, then Tim's desired result would be to con the reader into thinking that Ignatius offers a clear link from John to Ignatius. Roman Catholics are fond of this "find the spade" parlor trick. A. Cleveland Coxe, who edited and wrote the Preface to the Ignatian Letters for the standard reference volumes *Ante-Nicene Fathers* wrote, "The epistles ascribed to Ignatius have given rise to more controversy than any other document connected with the primitive Church" (p.46). To those seminary trained, such as myself, this is a fact picked up in any work dealing with the serious study of these "fathers." The problem is that Ignatius is said to have 15 letters, 8 of which are now universally agreed to be forgeries. 7 are found to be authentic, but the problem here is that we have a Syriac, Longer Greek, and a Shorter Greek version of several of the 7 letters. Most scholars opt for the Shorter Greek version.

Aside from all of this, let's grant Tim his rather un-provable wishes. The wish is granted that Ignatius knew John, the author of Revelation and the Gospel, and was a "disciple" of John as well. That is, that he had intimate communications with John (two of the now spurious "letters of Ignatius" were written to John the Apostle. Another was written to Mary herself. This was based on the tradition that Ignatius was one of the children placed on Jesus' lap, maybe Tim believes that one, too). Tim quotes *Ignatius'* views of the resurrection of the "flesh" and wants the reader to conclude that since he was a disciple of John, then *John must have taught resurrection of the flesh*. Also, that Jesus still has roughly a 5 foot 7 inch frame, and weighs approximately 157 pounds (these figures are approximate, we do not know Jesus' actual weight and height, but he had to have height and weight, and if in the "same body", then this weight and height must be in heaven right now as we speak, floating above us, and occupying space. These are problems Tim might not be aware of in this discussion, but among theologians, they are brought up).

However, more often than any other subject is Ignatius' view of the Church. The Church was to be ruled by One Bishop, several Presbyters, and Deacons. The Bishop (which he was, in Antioch) oversaw several churches in the area (a bishopric). The Bishop was appointed by God himself, according to Ignatius. Here is just one quote to save time in regards to Ignatius' view of the Bishop: "He who honors the bishop has been honored by God; he who does anything without the knowledge of the bishop, does, in reality, serve

the devil” (*Smyrn.* 9 – Greek Shorter Version). Since Ignatius taught this, and since Ignatius was taught of John, then it follows that Baptist and Presbyterians and Methodists are of the “devil”. Roman Catholics and the Nineteenth century Tractarians for the Church of England have argued along these same lines. Maybe Tim is a Episcopalian and we did not know it.

Secondly, Ignatius *was not* a Pre-Millennialist (chiliast). Charles Hill, and eminent expert in the study of Patristic theology wrote in his celebrated and thoroughly documented book, *Regnum Caelorum: Patterns of Millennial Thought in Early Christianity* (Eerdmans) that Ignatius did not entertain an “intermediate state” as did Justin and Irenaeus. In all of his letters, no Millennial references are made. In fact, Ignatius believed that the Old Testament saints were “raised from the dead” (*Letter to the Magnesians*, 9). Irenaeus flatly denies this. Trouble in Apostolic Fathers Land! I thought John was around to clear all this up. I could pick at this type of bogus reasoning on Tim’s part all day long, but I won’t bore the reader. His quote of Ignatius proves what Ignatius believed, and how Ignatius interpreted the New Testament. It does NOT prove what the New Testament meant. If it does, then Tim better start looking for a Bishop to honor.

Well, one last thing. Ignatius believed he was living in the “last days.” He wrote, “These are the last times....either let us fear the wrath of God *which is about to come*, or the grace that is present” (*Let. Eph.* 11). Does Tim believe that the “last days” were around 107 A.D.? Was the wrath of God “about to come” then? John taught Ignatius that it was. Or did he?

Enough about Ignatius. Let’s deal with *Acts* 1. First off, in the passage Tim selected, notice that the word “body” (*soma*) is not mentioned. Neither the adverb “bodily.” Tim, who has set himself up as a scholar, ought to know the Nicene Creed, which reflect the orthodox position of the Trinity (and the Chalcedonian Creed of 451). I accept both of these Creeds because they are Scriptural. But, maybe Tim does not. Jesus took upon himself “human nature” (*natura*). He was not a human *person*. Chalcedon explicitly denies this. The Logos is the Person, the Second Person, of the Trinity. The Second Person has Two Natures, Human and Divine. But, there is only one Divine Person, the Logos. Clearly, the Logos has not “arms and hands.” He is equal (“of the same essence of”) with the Father. That is, Jesus is Fully God. God has no arms. He does not have a big nose, either. Jesus, in his incarnation, had human arms. But, this is to do with his human *nature*. It is not at all clear that Jesus, upon his Ascension and exaltation, retained his actual hairy arms. *The point of theology has always been that Jesus retains for eternity his **human nature**.* Tim has made the blunder to include “hairy arms” in the definition of *human nature*. It is clear that man was made in God’s “image” and that God has no “form” but is spirit. The “image” then cannot be “form” but must be man’s rationality. This is standard theology 101. Human nature, which Our Lord took upon himself, also involved taking on “flesh.” But, according to Paul, “we no longer regard Messiah according to the flesh.” So, Tim wants me to answer “what happened to Jesus’ body after the ascension?” Well, Tim, what happened to Elijah’s body in his ascension? What happened to Enoch’s? It was often Jesus’ strategy to answer a question with another question. And that’s where I will leave this question.

You tell me what happened to Elijah's body. To it de-materialize? Does he have it now? He can't have it now, since the resurrection has not happened, yet. So, where is it? Did it float back down to earth? Is Elijah alive? Is not God the God of the LIVING? The human nature (and all that involves) is alive. Elijah is a living *human being*, but, clearly, he has not yet received his *physical body* in the resurrection of the dead in your view. Therefore, one need not retain a physical body in order to retain a human nature, or to be fully and entirely human. One need only one thing to be human: the image of God.

Back to Acts 1. "This same Jesus" it says. I agree wholeheartedly. This same Jesus, the Logos, the Human and Divine Natures, appeared again "a second time" in A.D. 70. You mean, "the same hairs and arms that he had." I don't see that spelled out in the text, Tim. How you can get that from the word "same" is beyond me.

"In the same manner" (*hon tropon* – Greek) is found in the context of passive verbs. Passive verbs in Greek, as in English, means the subject of the verb is being acted upon and not producing the action. Jesus was "taken up" and a "cloud" received him. These are passives. What took Jesus up? *In what manner* was Jesus taken? Obviously, He ascended *by the power of God*. So, *in like manner* he shall return by the power of God. That's all these verses assert. This is not a proof-text to demonstrate the "visible, bodily" second coming of Christ. It is not plain *at all* that everyone could "see" Jesus. I have read it several times that if a non-disciple was looking at the disciples on the mount, they would have seen a bunch of men looking at nothing. The Greek interchange of the verb for "see" here can most certainly imply that they were seeing an appearance of the Resurrected Christ, as they had before. This does not, in any way, shape, or form, deny that Jesus had arisen *as a human being*. Secondly, it does not logically negate that he arose *in the same body he died with*. Most think that Jesus' body was "glorified" at that point. But, he does not receive "glorification" until his ascends to the Father. The Bible is clear here. The glorification is not a glorification of "hairs and arms" but a glorification of *humanity in Christ*. Man was exalted in Christ, because Christ was Man and because he was also Fully God. Tim wants to make all of this about hairs and arms, and "what happened to Jesus' toenails." I don't know, Tim. It's a silly question. Read a book on Systematic Theology from someone other than Chafer. In accordance with the Creeds of the Church: Preterism affirms the Human NATURE of Christ and the eternity of that nature. We affirm the resurrection of Christ's body. When you start asking what happened to the tongue of Jesus, whether in whole or in part, you ask a silly question that deserves a silly response. By the way, where is Elijah's tongue?

The imagery here, as many scholars are suggesting, is Luke pointing to *Daniel 7*. There, "the son of man" comes "with the clouds of heaven" to the Ancient of Days and receives all dominion, power and glory. It has long been asserted in the church that Daniel is seeing the Ascension of Christ. The "coming on the clouds" is not *from* the Father *to* the earth, but *from* the earth *to* the Father (the Ancient of Days). Thus, Luke's "clouds" are the heavenly "clouds" of Daniel, receiving from the "world below" and ushering him in to the "world above" from where is he from (*John 17*). It is *there*, according to *Hebrews* that Christ *finishes his work of atonement by cleansing the heavenlies with his blood, preparing a place for his beloved Bride so that God would dwell in His People*. The death, burial, resurrection, ascension, exaltation, preparation, and purifying the

heavenly Tabernacle are all connected to “salvation” which he would “bring with him” (*Heb 9.27*) a “second time.” In Tim’s view, this has taken 2,000 years and counting!

We are to regard Jesus from the “world above” perspective. That this is what Luke wants to gain from the text is, in my opinion, quite correct. Jesus is the “son of man” taken by the power of God with heavenly clouds to receive glory and begin his Davidic reign on the throne (*Acts 2.30*). The Davidic throne is *heavenly*, not *earthly* is Peter’s point. Salvation could not accomplished through *earthly, fleshly means*. Salvation must be accomplished solely “from above.” Jesus is from heaven, he came to earth, he ascended back to heaven, and accomplishes salvation. From “beginning to end” salvation was removed from the sphere of Fallen Man and accomplished through the “heavenly man” as Paul called him. Jesus is the “**firstborn** out of the dead.” Which “birth”? Mary? Or Resurrection? Clearly, as Man, Jesus was “born” out of the dead (the realm held in power by Satan and the Death – *Hebrews 2.9*). Are believers not also “made alive” and “born” from the “power of the Death” *like Jesus*? Paul emphatically states this in *Romans 6*. We have **died** in the likeness of His Death, and also shall be made alive *in the likeness of his resurrection*. Now, did the Roman Christian really die when they accepted Christ? In what sense did they die in the likeness of Christ’s death? Physically? So also, in what sense were they being made alive by the Spirit in the likeness of Christ’s resurrection? Physically? The parallel does not work in the traditional view because they view Jesus’ resurrection merely in terms of “flesh” and from a “this world” perspective. In short, the birth Jesus bore “out of the dead”, of which he was the “first”, is also the same birth he gives to those ‘dead in sins’. We are the “Church of the *firstborn*.” Tim requires physical death, then some intermediate time before resurrection, then physical re-birth, again. Therefore, we are “born again” spiritually, die physically, born again-again physically! How can this nonsense be? (I already know Tim’s desperate answer, but I’ll let him attempt it).

It is refreshing in the Preterist view to realize that I don’t have to physically die in order to enjoy the presence of God dwelling in the “one body” (the “body of Christ”). I don’t have to wait anymore in order to have full communion with God as directed by the Scriptures. I don’t have to wait anymore to have full access to the Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies, Jesus Christ, has descended to the world through the Spirit and “dwells” in the Church: he is our God, and we are his people, and he shall dwell with us forever and ever. Tim calls this “heresy.” He calls me a “heretic” and one who is “outside Christianity.” I don’t know how telling folks about the Eternal Son of God who became Man and took upon Himself Human Nature in order to die as our substitution and be raised on the Third Day according to the Scriptures so that all those who drink freely of the living waters located in the New Jerusalem Community of God’s Holy People, having been made acceptable to God through Christ, by the Spirit, blessed Trinity, is heresy, but Tim says it is. It’s amazing.

One last point, is the issue of “timing.” I skipped the lexical entrance of “parousia”. I’ll save that for my last post. Tim does not cite any lexicon. His examples of “parousia” hardly prove his case. Parousia does not entail “bodily” in its definition, nor “visible” either. The word means “presence.” This “presence” can be “bodily”, sure, as in the case of Paul. But, its usage in Greek (not just the NT) does not always imply this. My last

point, however, stems from the last debate. Timing has everything to do with the nature of the event.

Now, I want to steer the readers attention to something I got Tim to finally admit on paper. I have written about our agreement before, but he never responded. I knew he agreed with me on this point in a post he sent to our old website. But, here, he admits it in print: "I do agree that the *outward form* continued from the time of Christ until the temple was destroyed in A.D. 70." He then cites *Hebrews* 8.13: "In that he says, "new covenant", he has made the first obsolete. Now, what is becoming obsolete and growing old is soon to vanish away." Before showing how Tim gives away the whole shooting match here, Tim thinks that the perfect tense in "has made" means that the old covenant (which is the object of the verb) means completion. Well, the author further clarifies: "what IS BEING MADE OLD" (present). The thing that "was made old" is ALSO "being made old." The object does not change in the verbs. But, Tim's artificial exegesis changes mid-stream, which ought to alarm any exegete: Tim said, "the Old Covenant was therefore "obsolete" from the moment of Christ's crucifixion." Then he states that it was the "outward remnants of the old covenant" and the "observable remnants of the old covenant" is what "vanishes away." Thus, the SUBJECT MATTER has changed for Tim. The OLD COVENANT is the subject of "has made old" (perfect), but the OUTWARD REMNANTS is the subject of the "being made old"! Clearly, these are two different things. But, the Greek here makes no such distinction. THE OBJECT of the first verb IS THE SAME SUBJECT as the following verbs! Thus, I can freely translate this verse, following standard principles with: 'When he says, "new", He has made old the first covenant, but the old covenant which is being made old and growing aged is near vanishing.' That's a strict translation. Tim's translation is: '...he has made old the old covenant, but the *outward remnant of the old covenant* is being made old and the *outward remnant of the old*, not the old covenant itself, is growing aged and is near vanishing.' These are two different things, Tim. You have NO RIGHT nor any EXEGETICAL basis for switching definitions. The object of the verb ("the first one") is the same subject of the verb "being made old" and "vanishing."

Therefore, the author uses the perfect tense to denote an action that has occurred to the old covenant and is unalterably worked out in the present day of the writer to the point where the action that began is now brought to *completion*. It was the *old covenant* that was "vanishing" not just the "outward forms." Amazingly, Tim wrote that the vanishing of the outward forms had "nothing to do with the end of the Old Covenant itself"! This statement confirms my objection to Tim's fanciful exegesis: he switches definitions MID STREAM of a single verse!

Now, on to the other matter of this verse. How does Tim know that the "soon to vanish" applies to A.D. 70, which he plainly admits? Could it be that the word "soon" there means "soon"? The word is common enough: "enngus." It means something "near at hand." Well, Tim, if "soon" means "soon" here, then what does "in a VERY, VERY, LITTLE WHILE" mean in just the next chapter already cited? Does "soon" here mean "soon" in terms of what was getting ready to happen (Jerusalem's demise), but in "a very, very, little while" mean something indefinitely in the long, long future? The acrobats of exegesis to pull this distinction off will be fun to watch.

The reason why I show this point is because I cannot get Premillennialists to admit that “soon” means “soon.” And here, Tim admits it! The old covenant would SOON disappear! And Jesus’ “coming, without delay” would ALSO come “in a very, very, little while.” In Luke 21.20-28 I have already shown that the destruction of Jerusalem is connected with the “redemption.” “When you see these things, then lift up your heads, for your REDEMPTION has DRAWN NIGH” (*enggizomai* – the verb form of “soon” – *engqus*, above). The redemption surrounding the demise of the OLD would bring into PERFECTION those enduring “to the END.” The OT saints would arise “from the dust” of the cords of DEATH and come into their BLESSED INHERITANCE, the ETERNAL CITY OF JERUSALEM. Also, those “alive” would be completely “changed” from sinners to sons. They “were being” changed already, and they “were changed” because what Christ set into motion was DEFINITELY going to happen. Also, “they SHALL BE changed.” It was the “already/not yet” that was at work, and when the “not yet” came to completion, the “already” was perfected. This happened when Jesus “appeared a second time to bring SALVATION to those who eagerly waited for him” (9.28). If they already had PERFECTED SALVATION, then what was Jesus bringing? More salvation? That’s absurd. When would this salvation happen? “The deliverer shall come FROM Zion (not “to”) and shall turn godlessness from Jacob, for this is my COVENANT (new covenant) with them, WHEN I SHALL TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS” (*Ro* 11.26,27). When did the new covenant come into FULLNESS? When the OLD vanished! When did Jesus PERFECT the saints that died under the old covenant? When he made old the first, completely. When was “salvation” brought? When he appeared a second time. And when was all of this supposed to have happened: “soon” and “in a very, very, little while.” Unless, of course, “very, very, little while” entertains the possibility of “long, long, time from now.”

Thus, since the Parousia was “in a very, very little while” and concerned the “Fall of Jerusalem” and the “vanishing of the old covenant”, then it is also clear that the New Jerusalem would be “restored” to the people of God “in the heavenlies” which is entertained by the question of the disciples in Acts 1: “are at this time you going to RESTORE the KINGDOM to ISRAEL?” Jesus’ answer is to be found in his ASCENSION concerning the SPIRITUAL nature of the restoration of the kingdom to God’s people, Israel (“one body”).

Samuel Frost, Ph.D. (in progress)
Elder, Christ Covenant Church
St. Petersburg, Florida
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