

Lest They Should Be Put Out of the Synagogue

Holger Neubauer

In John's gospel, we have an account which supplies an underlying cause of why so many refuse to acknowledge the truth of God's word. Many feared expulsion from the only fellowship they knew. When word came to the ruling class of the Jews that a blind man had been healed, they quickly called his parents to attest that the man who had been healed was actually blind from birth. After the parents confirmed that their son had been born blind they deflected the questions back to their son, saying "he is of age, ask him: he shall speak for himself." John 9:22 says, "These words spoke his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue." This fear of being put out of the synagogue affected even those high stations of Jewish authority. In John 12:42,43, we have these words, "Nevertheless among the chief rulers many believed on him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue. For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." We really need to contemplate what it meant for a Jew of the first century to be put out of the synagogue. The synagogue was their life. Jesus attended one from his youth (Luke 4:16). What would become of one who was cast out? Where would he go and what would he do? The uncertainty of being cast out was enough to make anyone take another hard look at the man who claimed to be the Son of God. But, ultimately, to fear expulsion from the fellowship of the synagogue in light of the truth that was as bright as the noon day's sun, was in fact to love men more than God.

Those of us who have embraced the position that Jesus has returned know what it means to be cast out. We have been marked, withdrawn from, avoided like the plague and have had so many false charges labeled against us one might wonder what would have happened to us had we really taught a false doctrine. Make no mistake about it, this position added nothing to our reputation, to our security for the future, to our finances, to our esteem in the eyes of men. Then why have we taken our stand? Simply, we love the praise of God more than the praise of men. The "at hand" statements of Revelation 1:3 and Revelation 22:10 are clearer than the noon day's sun. The entire message of John's Revelation was near when John wrote. From there it is but a few short steps to see the glaring truth that Jesus returned in the first century. This forceful truth is resisted upon the basis of presupposition and tradition rather than honesty and consistency in exegesis. We know that there are others who believe what we believe but are afraid to take the next step. We know of brethren who have been withdrawn from without as much as a hearing. We know of brethren that are wondering where to go and what to do. Let it be known that not every brother in the church is unreasonable and churlish. Many are willing to listen, study and rethink old held traditions. We encourage struggling brothers to reach out to us and others who have made their stand. The beauty of the truth, the consistency of Bible interpretation, and the peace that passes understanding are all well worth it.

Covenant Eschatology is consistent, it is conservative and it is most certainly biblical. We who have embraced this wonderful truth, have not hidden ourselves from the present controversy and neither are we afraid to meet our opponents. We will not duck and hide, and neither will we cower and bow. Our prayer is that within a generation this denominational claptrap about a future return of Christ will be yesterday's

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news just as pre-millennialism is now seen as patently false, though the majority of our brotherhood embraced it at one time. Through the work of Wallace and Oliphant the false view of a coming kingdom in which ravenous animals would be made tame and physical swords would be beaten into plowshares is now all but drummed out. The next step needs to be taken. Jesus promised to return in the very generation he was living (Matthew 10:23; 16:27,28; James 5:8,9; Hebrews 9:28-10:37). There was only one second coming of Christ, not two second comings. The Great Thief Coming of Christ is posited within the framework of the Revelation, which was near when John wrote (16:15; 22:10,12). We are looking for brave and honest soldiers of the truth, who are not afraid to unsheathe the sword of the truth and stand upon the word of God. We are looking for men and women who are more concerned with truth than tradition. We are looking for men and women who are willing to place truth as the most important commodity of their lives. Are you willing to be put out of the synagogue of men's doctrines and make your stand with God? We are praying that you will make your stand soon. [HN]

Homer Hailey Quote

From the Preceptor, April 1964

"It is usually thought that after this verse (Mt 24:34) Jesus begins to speak of the "second coming." This does not necessarily follow. The expression, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (v. 35) is a further use of prophetic language to describe the passing of an order. In describing the coming judgment upon His people and the ushering in of righteousness and salvation, God describes the passing of the order as a passing of heaven and earth. "Lift up your eyes to heaven, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall be old like a garment: and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished" (Isa. 51:6). It is in this vein that Jesus speaks of the passing of heaven and earth, and of His word holding fast"

Reserved unto Fire – Part 2

Scott Klaft

The Broader Context [continued]

The previous installment of this series introduced the first two verses of Second Peter chapter 3 by acknowledging that the things Peter was writing were reminders of what had already been taught to those first-generation Christians, either by the Old Covenant scriptures or by the apostles themselves. It was an admission that the end-time matters that Peter was addressing in this chapter were the same end-time matters presented to us by the Old Testament.

It is appropriate to ask, what are the subjects – what are the themes – what is under consideration in this chapter? It can hardly be missed. He speaks of a fulfillment of prophecy in “the last days” (v. 3). He is talking about “the promise of [the Lord’s] coming” (v. 4). He is speaking of “the day of judgment” (v. 7). He is describing “the day of the Lord” (v. 10), which he also calls, “the coming of the day of God” (v. 12).

Now, if Peter’s doctrine concerning these things can be found in his own teachings elsewhere, and were based upon those promises and prophecies of the Old Covenant scripture, we must surely look to those things as interpretive guides to 2nd Peter 3 that must harmonize together with it. Whatever conditions, descriptions, and/ or time designations are contextually associated in those subjects *must* also apply to Peter’s discussion of those subjects in this chapter. That makes sense, doesn’t it? Otherwise we are calling into question whether or not scripture really was breathed from the mouth of God (cf. 2Timothy 3:16, 17).

It is far beyond the scope of these articles to examine all of the possible passages that deal with this subject. Perhaps it will be helpful to narrow down just a few examples from Peter’s own mouth and pen.

Acts 2

From the first recorded speech Peter gave on Pentecost, we know Peter's answer to the question, "What meaneth this?" (Acts 2:12 - "This," being the miraculous speaking and hearing in other languages - SK). Peter said it is the fulfillment of prophecy (cf. Acts 2:16). This properly designates as "the last days" the period in which the Holy Spirit would be given (2:17). It was what would take place "before that great and notable day of the Lord come" (2:20). This, of course, is an extensive quote from Joel 2:28 - 32, except that Peter stops short of finishing the quote in v. 32. He holds that in reserve for the end of his sermon. I'll underline for emphasis. Take a look:

Joel 2:32 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

Acts 2:21 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Peter stopped short of the end of the quote found in Joel 2:32. Now see how he weaved it into the end of his speech, but pay close attention to how Joel identified those individuals.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Those repenting and being baptized and receiving the gift from the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 were the *remnant* of whom the prophet Joel had spoken and they named that time "the last days." Was there any time frame given in that context that might clue us in on how long the "last days" would last? Try the next verse:

Acts 2:40 ¶And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."

That is a reference to Deuteronomy 32:5 & 20 in which God saw the future of Israel: "And He said: 'I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end will be, For they are a perverse generation, Children in whom is no faith.'" (Deut. 32:20). Peter made application of this passage to his generation that were experiencing the "last days" and witnessing "last days" fulfillment of prophecy.

It would make sense that, if we had some biblical commentary indicating how long a generation is, we would know how long the "last days" were to last. The inspired penman of the Hebrew letter gives us precisely that:

Hebrews 3:7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "*Today, if you will hear His voice, 8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. 10 Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.'*" (NKJV)

Hebrews 3:17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? ...

The generation that first came up out of Egypt and angered God, prevented their own entrance to the Promised Land. They wandered for forty years before the last of them died. The *remnant*, those obeying the Gospel in Peter's days, therefore, was a generation of forty years. No matter what time is determined to start "the last days," they cannot extend to our present day. The "last days" in which the Holy Spirit gave miraculous gifts in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy,

were the same "last days" that existed "before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come" (Joel 2:20).

It is only reasonable to accept that these were Peter's teachings about "the last days" of which he was reminding them in 2nd Peter 3. He was reminding them of the prophecies of the final days of his own generation as it pertained to Israel and its Covenant. The nation of Judah was facing its final days.

Acts 3

There is a greater body of Peter's work yet to examine. There will only be room for a couple more examples. Acts 3 contains another example of Peter addressing these subjects. Here he admonishes his Jewish audience to repent with a quotation from Deuteronomy 18. Compare:

Deuteronomy 18:18 'I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. 19 'And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.

Acts 3:22 "For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. 23 'And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'

How the people would react to the Prophet-like-Moses would be the determining factor whether their fate would be destruction. Peter follows up this quotation with this divinely inspired commentary:

Acts 3:24 "Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days.

First, notice that all of the prophets had spoken of Peter's present days, which, by implication, is stating that Peter was presently living in the fulfillment-days of those prophecies. They were in the focal point in time, the goal of all the ages (cf. 1st Corinthians 10:11). Peter was not under the persuasion that the Old Covenant had been done away at Jesus' cross as some today affirm. He was teaching that they were living in the time prophetically and expressly described within the Old Covenant (Moses' writings included). Peter's eschatological teachings came from the Old Covenant prophets. Thus, when Peter in 2nd Peter 3, intentionally calls upon what he had taught along with what the scriptures taught as a reminder, whatever it is he proceeds to say *must* both be in harmony with, and actually be found in, the Old Covenant scriptures. All of which – every "jot" and every "tittle" – needed to be fulfilled *before* the Law of Moses would pass (cf. Matt 5:18).

We rightly conclude, therefore, that the days under consideration in 2nd Peter 3 were speaking of the fulfillment of Old Covenant prophecies. There should be no surprise then, if the language Peter uses to describe those events should, not only sound like, but actually be calling upon, Old Covenant prophecies regarding the end of the Mosaic economy and law. It spoke of a transition from one age to another age, at the pinnacle of which was a Final Judgment of the Lord upon Israel.

Acts 4

One of the problems with modern readers is that we tend to see things in scripture as if the manner of thought and expression was the same as ours. It wasn't. The Hebrew people, even in the time of Jesus and Peter, thought in a more fluid, poetic, occasionally hyperbolic method than our modern age. There are different implications to the way they communicated than our literalized, rigidly precise, mathematical interactions today. One of the chief differences between the way they spoke and the way we speak is found in the way the Hebrew mind (though, perhaps speaking Greek) would make references. When an inspired man was speaking, or when one of the New Testament penmen were writing, they would intentionally reference Old Covenant prophecies with barely as much as an allusion to it, but mentally they were importing the entire context of that prophecy to make the point.

In Acts 4:11, Peter is doing this very thing. In speaking before the Jewish counsel, Peter quotes from Psalm 118:22. The quote is not random. Peter was importing the entirety of Psalm 118 which is a Messianic psalm of praise. The Jewish counsel understood that Peter was putting them on the opposite side of those "gates of righteousness" that the psalm references (cf. Psa. 118:19, 20) for "salvation" (v. 21) in the "day that the Lord hath made" (v. 24).

This psalm is quoted several times in the New Testament. Matthew 21:9 is a parallel account with Mark 11:9, and John 12:13 describing the reaction of the people as Jesus came to Jerusalem. The people were

importing the entirety of the psalm by quoting only a small part of v. 26. Of course, this would agitate the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem inevitably leading to the scathing rebuke from Jesus found in Matthew 23. Jesus ended with the same quote of Psalm 118 in Matthew 23:39 (which is parallel with Luke 13:35).

Matthew 23:39 “for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’”

What the people meant by the quotation was what Jesus meant by the quotation. They were importing the entirety of Psalm 118. The Jewish mind would easily recognize that, while we labor for it. Peter, when quoting v. 22 of the psalm before the counsel, was importing the entire psalm also, and to nearly the same people to whom Jesus quoted v. 26. All of it had to do with the salvation designed by the Lord, referencing Jesus’ coming in the name of the Lord – not at the cross (that was not a coming), and not the first coming to humanity (that had already taken place, while the quotation places the coming in their future).

When Peter references “the coming of the Lord” in 2nd Peter 3, it must harmonize with his own teachings on it in Acts 4, which comes from Psalm 118, which Jesus also references. Let’s go back to that again, just for a moment. Following that scathing rebuke in Matthew 23, Jesus decides to leave the temple. The disciples mention the temple and learn that not one stone would be left on another. This prompts their questions in Matthew 24 (cf. Mark 13, Luke 17, 21).

They ask, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” (Matt. 24:4). And, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?” (Mrk. 13:4). And, “Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?” (Lk. 21:7). (That, by the way, is at least five questions; but in true Hebraic thought, they were all asking about the same events.) They recognized that the end of the age would be at Jesus’ coming and the fulfillment of those things He had said about the temple and the Jewish leaders. The sign of those things coming to pass were equal to the timing of when all those things would be fulfilled, which is also equal to the sign of His coming. Where, from the context, were they prompted to ask about Jesus’ coming? It was in Jesus’ quotation of Psalm 118:26 in Matthew 23:39.

When Peter references Psalm 118 in Acts 4, he imported and implied by that quotation the coming of Jesus. It was the “day the Lord hath made” (Psa. 118:24). It was the day in which the gates of righteousness could be entered (Psa. 118:19, 20). The timing of this cannot be ignored. The disciples knew that Jesus’ coming brought both the salvation of Psalm 118 and the destruction of the temple. All of this must be harmonized with 2nd Peter 3’s “day of the Lord,” and “the promise of His coming,” and the “day of Judgment.” Jesus’ answer to their questions makes Matthew 24 and 25 a parallel text with 2nd Peter 3.

These are Peter’s teaching on the subjects of which he was reminding the readers in 2nd Peter. There is plenty more to be studied in the book of Acts where Peter is teaching. This is not meant to be a comprehensive study of it all. We need to move on to what Peter had to say in his first letter. [SK]

I KNOW You Are a False Teacher

Let Me Prove It

Steve Baisden

My name is Steve Baisden, and I’m a false teacher...at least that’s what I’ve been told on numerous occasions. First of all, I whole heartedly deny the accusation of being a “false teacher.” Secondly, I am more than willing to discuss my thoughts with anyone, and I’m especially willing to defend Biblical truth. Thirdly, I would like to take a few moments to discuss the irony that goes along with the ALL of these empty claims.

On the one hand, there are those who “know” that I am wrong and a false teacher, yet they can never tell me why, or even know half of what I actually believe. On several occasions, I have heard, “you are WRONG on this "AD" thing,” which is often followed by, “By the way, what does AD even mean?” On other occasions, I hear, “Brother, don’t you know the Bible says the earth will be destroyed with fire when the Lord comes again.” However, when I ask them to show me the text, they reply with, “Well, I am not sure where it says it but I am sure it does.” How incredible it is that people “know” that I am wrong, but they cannot even give me the key passage of their “proof”?!

Another response I often encounter is this, “I cannot believe you have fallen for this AD 70 stuff, you are a smart man, you know the Bible, you have been a faithful brother for years, you of all people should know better.” Let that sink in...really absorb it. If those things are really true (that you believe them of me), shouldn’t it make you stop and, at the very least, consider WHY I believe this, or WHAT caused me to drift to this conclusion?

They tell me how the kingdom came on Pentecost, how the Lord will return in a physical body in the clouds and every eye will see Him, how every knee will bow, how the heavens and earth will be destroyed, how the graves will open, how we will stand in a line awaiting to be next to stand before the Lord in judgment waiting for the gavel of justice to strike the judges bar and pronouncement of my eternal destiny will be solidified, etc. Every now and then I hear about the Lords Supper "showing His death till He come again" or if I am married that denies the resurrection has come. And almost without exception they will say, "Steve don’t you know the Bible says this or that." They tell me these as if I had never even thought about or considered these things with many hours of honest objective research and desire only wishing to know the truth of these things.

Many act as though I have either quit reading my Bible, or never really read it to begin with. However, within a short while they realize this is not so, and that they are the ones who are in need of further investigation, NOT me! I once believed the coming of the Lord was future as they now do. I used these same arguments years ago in order to try to prove that the Lord had not already come

the second time. I used EVERY passage I could in attempt to prove that I was right, that what I had been taught was right, that what the church of Christ at large was teaching was right.... I used all these arguments plus MANY others trying to prove that my original understanding of the coming of the Lord was yet future. Yet all those arguments failed when tried by an honest exegesis of scripture, "comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1Cor 2:13).

It reminds me of the David Hester / Don Preston debate which took place last month where David Hester popped out 23 "questions" in a row like a machine gun and said these "questions" 'prove' my position. The only problem with that is this: when those things are so misunderstood and misapplied they cannot prove anything. ONLY when properly applied and understood can they be used as proof! IF David Hester was sincere he would have first taken the time to contextually and harmoniously prove that his "questions" were indeed first being presented accurately! Since he did not do that those 23 questions fail to be valid, and they illustrate the sheer desperation that he was in. A side note here, David also knew full well that it would be impossible for anyone to answer 23 questions in the limited time that was given to respond. He did nothing more than show his disingenuous desperation by such trickery.

I, too, could pop out 23 questions in a few minutes and say "there, that proves my position." But I would not stoop to such deplorable tactics. I want to engage in genuine open Bible study where an absolute proof can be ascertained. I want those in which I am studying to go step by step and see things they have never seen before. Things that have been there all the time but because of preconceived ideas have been overlooked and missed. I want them to see the truth, and NOT see what they have so wrongly been taught their whole lives as I had been!

Before anyone pops off with the typical "I KNOW you are wrong and a false teacher" statement they better first understand that any position that places Jesus’ second coming at a different time than what the

Old Testament, Jesus, and His disciples claimed, they are the ones who are wrong and they are the false teachers! No matter how many people and denominations agree with them (Rom 3:4)!

Jesus promised He would return in judgment before all His disciples would die (Mt 16:27-28). Is there anyone walking around that is 2000 years old? Did Jesus lie? There are no other alternatives: either He kept His word or He did not. I believe He did.

Jesus promised the judgment and the resurrection of those in Hades in His generation 2000 years (Mt 12:41-42). Was Jesus wrong? I say no.

Jesus promised His coming where all would see Him, in the clouds, with the Angels, when the great trumpet would sound would happen when Jerusalem would be destroyed in that generation 2000 years ago (Mt 24). Did Jesus get that wrong? I don't think so.

Jesus said till all the Old Testament was fulfilled every element of the Old Law would still exist (Mt 5:17-18). The Old Testament foretold of the earth being destroyed with fire (Zep 3:8-9). If this did not happen, then I guess we should all convert to Judaism. The Old Testament foretold of the coming of the Lord in judgment and resurrection (Dan 12, Zec 14, Deut 32, etc). Did Jesus not know what was written in the Law and the Prophets? Not a chance! But He still said till it was all fulfilled none of it would cease!

Jesus said His coming for redemption would be when ALL things written would be fulfilled and that would happen when Jerusalem was compassed with armies in that generation (Lk 21:20-32)! By the way, those verses teach there was a kingdom that would come at that time (Lk 21:31), which kingdom was that? Those who say His second coming for redemption is yet future and refuse to understand what was really being said have to tell us which kingdom it was that came with the destruction of Jerusalem. In their minds, it was not the same kingdom that was born on Pentecost, so please tell us which one it was. Jesus said it was the same kingdom (1Cor 15:24, Mt 13:31-33, Mt 16:27-28). And yet again, I agree with the Lord.

Paul reminded the Thessalonians of what Jesus said about His second coming and told them they would be alive and remaining when it happened (1Thes 4:15-17). They were to even pray that their whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved till His coming! Was Paul, guided by the Spirit, mistaken? No way!

I am often accused of changing words and phrases to fit my preconceived notions, but folks, I'm not the one doing it!

Jesus said He would come in that generation, Paul said the day was at hand (Rom 13:12), John said it is the last hour (1 Jn 2:18), Peter said the end of all things was at hand (1 Pt 4:7), and James said Jesus' coming was at hand (Js 5:8). All of this was 2000 years ago. Can you see it now? I am not the one redefining terms to fit my preconceived notions...it is the other way around! This is David Hester's "Humpty-Dumpty-Hermeneutic" in full swing! Friends, when we start saying that all of these passages are wrong (and they can be multiplied), we ultimately say the Bible was not inspired, and that is a dangerous road to walk! I absolutely believe in inspiration and that God ACCURATELY communicated this great truth to us. Jesus most assuredly kept His word and returned 2000 years ago.

A MAJOR lesson to be learned here is this: BEFORE you judge someone to be unworthy you had better have done your homework with an open honest heart and be prepared to prove your point (1Ths 5:21)! Be prepared to go the extra mile and really dig in. The typical eisegesis (an interpretation that expresses the interpreter's own ideas) done by those looking for a future return will not work! Hope deferred maketh the heart sick (Prv 13:12), and those who have deferred it for 2000 years and counting are making those who truly believe the scripture sick! [SB]

Does the Bible Make Predictions

Or Does It State Facts?

Guest Article

Here is a question I recently began to mull over in my mind: does the Bible make predictions? Follow me for a second as we explore this idea. A meteorologist makes prediction about what they believe is going to happen with the weather. They gather all of the relevant data, analyze it, and then make their predictions (guesses) as to what is going to happen, today, tomorrow, and over the next several days. Sports analysts do similar things. Those on who report on sports give their opinion (make their prediction) on who is going to win the title for that particular sport for that season, or who will win the next scheduled match or event; all of this comes from looking at the relevant data at hand and deliberating about many of the possible variables that will have to be dealt with. Is this what the Bible does? Does God make predictions about what is going to happen based off of the relevant data that is at hand? Does God just guess what is going to happen in the future?

Did Noah (through inspiration) predict (guess) that a flood was coming? Is that why he built the arc? Gen 6

Did God guess that Abraham's descendants would be strangers in a land that did not belong to them for four hundred years (Gen 15:13)?

When the man of God came from Judah to Bethel to speak against Jeroboam and prophesy against his alter, he named Josiah as the one who would defile that idolatrous altar by burning the bones of the idolatrous priests on it (1K 13:1-2; 2K 23:16). Was that a lucky guess? On what data could that have been based?

Cyrus the Great is named 150 years before his birth as the one who will defeat the Babylonians (Is 44:28-45:1). Was this a prediction?

Are the events of Daniel 2 or 11 just a guess? Was Daniel guessing that there would be 4 world empires? On what relevant data could Daniel base his analysis for chapter 11?

Are all of these things predictions? Or are they statements of fact? Did Micah guess that Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, or did God tell Micah that was going to happen as a sign so that people could use it to identify Messiah? The same could be said for all of those events listed, and many that are not: did God guess those things or did He state that they would happen so that we could know that He is God (Is 46:9-10)? *NOTE* There are times God warned of coming destruction, but also promised that it would be abated with repentance, like with the story of Jonah and Nineveh. However, as a whole, God does not predict the future, but rather states what unquestionably will happen, and gives it so us so that we can be ready for it.

Now let us apply this to the New Testament. Are the following statements predictions or absolute statements of fact?

Rom 13:12

12 The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Rom 16:20

And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

Heb 10:37

37 For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay.

James 5:8-9

You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. 9 Do not complain, brethren, against one another, that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.

1 Peter 4:7

7 The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.

Rev 1:1-3

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must shortly take place... 3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

Rev 22:7

7 "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book."

There is an undeniable theme permeating the New Testament: before Jesus ascended into heaven He promised to return and the NT church was eagerly awaiting AND expecting that return to happen in their lifetime, as evidenced by the sample quotations from above. Are these quotations merely predictions? Are these little more than conjecture? If these are just guesses, what separates them from men like John Hagee, Harold Camping, Charles Russell, or anyone else who has predicted the return of Messiah? Those just named were obviously wrong in their predictions, which begs us to ask another question: were the writers of the NT wrong? The meteorologist makes his predictions based on the observable data at hand, but we all know that weather predictions leave much to be desired, especially the farther in advance they predict. You can just about make a game out of how much the weather for next Friday will change as you watch it throughout the week. It's the same thing with sports. Analysts, like in football, take all of the data into consideration and weight out many of the variables and make their guesses on who will win the national championship, or who will win conferences, or who will win a particular match-up on Saturday. Again, these are just guesses, and they often guess wrong. Who doesn't love an upset? Who doesn't love underdog, comeback stories? What makes those great is the odds being against them and people counting them out; but in the end, they were underdogs to begin with because uninspired people made guesses as to what would happen. But were the writers of the NT wrong? Can they be wrong? Was God wrong?

I believe the Bible to be written by the finger of God. I believe that when Moses was given the Law on Sinai, it came from God, not from Moses. I believe what Paul wrote Timothy when he said, "16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16-17). I have a high view of Scripture and inspiration, so I cannot accept that the Bible, Old or New Testament, makes predictions, mere guesses. I am convinced that God makes statement of fact. Thus, I believe that when Peter said, "the end of all things is at hand," (1 Pt 4:17), I believe he meant what he said, and read BOTH of his letters with that context. [GA]