



Notes from the Pastor

In Matthew 24:42, Jesus spoke these words. *“Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.”* For almost 2000 years the church has been waiting for the Bridegroom to return for His bride. “Jesus is coming again,” we hear! “Are you ready?” Have you made the necessary preparations for this grand and glorious event? If Christ should come back this year, will His return catch you by surprise, or are you dressed in wedding clothes waiting for the Groom to appear? (Matt. 22:11-12) Is there oil in your lamp? (Matt. 25:1-13). Will 2011 be the year we witness Jesus coming in the clouds to rapture His church to glory? (Acts 1:11) Or are the mockers right when they say, *“Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation”* (2 Pet. 3:4). Is the Second Coming really a fact, or just fairy-tale fiction? And, is it really true, that when He comes multitudes of unbelievers will be “Left Behind”?

The return of Christ, commonly referred to as the Second Coming, falls under the theological heading of *eschatology*, a word that means the study of last things or final events. Man’s curiosity about the future is not new. Even the disciples wanted Jesus to answer the mysteries concerning God’s future kingdom. *“Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”* (Matt. 24:3) Like us, the disciples were expecting that Messiah would return to establish a kingdom far different than the world we live in today. *“Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?”* (Acts 1:6) Discontent with the evils of society and the sin that permeates our culture, we all desire to live in a perfect world wherein God’s righteousness prevails. But is the promised kingdom to Israel to be taken literally or does the real *perousia* {Second Coming} lie beneath a veil of figurative heavenly language that only scholars and seminarians can understand?

Sadly, the various theological positions that are related to future events have divided believers who disagree, and damaged the church’s witness in the world. Bible study materials, daily devotionals, and otherwise good Christian literature and videos often convey perspectives about the future that differ from

our own (some we use here at FBC). The excellent daily devotional *Table Talk*, for example, has editors and authors who share and write convincingly about these various perspectives. Words like *Rapture, Tribulation, Premillennial, Amillennial, Postmillennial, Dispensational, and Preterism* have caused quite a stir among many modern evangelicals. Most Christians, today, are bewildered by all the confusion. How come so many saved, sincere, and sanctified saints disagree about when Jesus will return or if, in fact, these events have already taken place? Is the Scripture that ambiguous? Does God not want His people to know? Isn’t the Word “a light to our path,” even in the area of eschatology?

While this short summary will likely not answer all of your questions about future events, I’m praying that it will help you cut through the layers of confusion that currently cloud the landscape of the church. Rather than divide believers about when, where, why and how the Second Advent unfolds, may the imminent return of Christ unite the universal body about one certain fact: Jesus IS coming again! Are you prepared to meet Him?

One of the most significant issues related to the various eschatological positions concerns the nation Israel. Some hold the view that the church has replaced Israel. Those who embrace replacement theology believe that passages promising a future kingdom for Israel are now to be interpreted as promises exclusively for the church. While individual Jews are still being saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, some Christians tell us that the nation Israel has permanently forfeited God’s blessings because of their rejection of Messiah. In this view, the church has replaced Israel as the recipients of God’s favor. My own personal problem with this position is that it is steeped in works righteousness, not grace. Advocates of this view tell us that God’s blessing is conditional and based upon Israel’s obedience, and that His curses are due to Israel’s obstinate disobedience. This view affirms the old Pelagian heresy that man is **able** to do what God commands; that Israel’s sin was a matter of personal choice, a choice they could have avoided. Yet, Scripture says that *“all of us like sheep have gone astray”* (Isa. 53:6). *“There is none righteous,*

Continued on Page 3

Church Happenin's

- Monday, Jan 3 Council Meetings, 7 PM—If you would like to participate in the ministries at FBC, please join us. Elders & Deacons meet at 6:30.
- Wednesday, Jan. 5 Upward Bound Share-A-Dish Meeting at 11:30 AM at the Dillon home (1404 Dillon Rd).
- Thursday, Jan. 6 Ladies Bible Study resumes at noon with Lesson 11
- Saturday, Jan. 15 Men's Breakfast, 8 AM in the Fellowship Hall.
- Sunday, Jan. 16 Annual Business Meeting & Potluck, after Church
- Monday, Jan. 17 Church Office Closed
Elder Meeting, 6:30 PM
- January 24 to 31 Pastor Bruce will be out of town.
- Sunday, Jan. 30 Ray Kulper to Speak

Future Events

- Saturday, Feb. 12 Valentine Dinner Fellowship
- Sunday, Apr. 24 Easter Breakfast
- Saturday, Jun. 25 Church Picnic at Toll Bridge Park
- August 12-14 Family Camp at Camp Morrow
- October 14-16 Women's Retreat at Cannon Beach
- October 21-23 Men's Camp at Camp Morrow
- Sunday, Nov. 20 Thanksgiving Dinner Fellowship



BIRTHDAYS!

Hal Ueland	January 6
Jim Fitzgerald	January 7
Leonard Hickman	January 9
Rick Aldrich	January 11
Elaine Hardman	January 13
Kim Olsen	January 15
Dan DeHaven	January 16
Carol Baker	January 18
Bill Frost	January 22
Grace Rowan	January 22
Tagert Bardin	January 23
Hailey Clarke	January 25
Dane Ueland	January 28
James Ryan	January 29
Sarah Ryan	January 29
Cathy Brown	January 31



** If your birthday doesn't appear on the list, that means we have no record of it. Please let Lora know in the Church Office, and we will add you to our lists.

Church Library

Do you need a devotional book for 2011? We have several in our Church Library, as well as biographies, fiction, and study books. Have you checked out the library lately?. We have lots of good books for winter reading for all ages. Please sign the card on the back page of the book and place it in the blue box in the library. See Marian Warrenka for more information.

Help for the Needy

Our Church Deacon fund is a means of ministering to people in our church family and community who are in financial distress. The Deacon fund is not a part of our general budget, but is funded by special offerings. The fund has seen a great deal of use this year, and needs your support to continue ministering to the needy. Please prayerfully consider how you may be able to help those in distress. There are small envelopes in the church pews which can be used for this purpose, or checks may be marked for the Deacon fund and submitted in the Sunday morning offering.



Notes from the Pastor

Continued from Page 1

no not one" (Psa. 14:1-3; Rom. 3:10-12). Apart from God's grace, we all reject Messiah, both Jew and Gentile alike. In our own human strength, "*No one seeks after God*" (Psa. 53:2-3), let alone has the ability to obey Him; Israel included.

The Bible actually teaches that because of Adam's imputed sin, man is unable to keep God's Law; that children are not born neutral, but with a sinful bent that will lead them to choose evil as they physically mature (Psa. 51:5). Psalm 58:3 says that "*the wicked are estranged from the womb; these who speak lies go astray from birth.*" While man's sinful choices are willful, they spring from the condition of his corrupt heart. "*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (Rom. 3:23). We have all fallen short of obeying the commandments of God's perfect Law, and thus are guilty before a holy God for rejecting and rebelling against His Word (James 2:10). "*Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*" (Gen. 6:5).

The good news of the Gospel is that God hasn't rejected us! In the Person of Jesus, God came down to earth to rescue us! But because of sin's power, the believer's obedience to the gospel must be credited to the supernatural work of Christ empowered by the Holy Spirit (Phil. 2:12-13). Favor with God is not obtained on the basis of personal righteousness but imputed righteousness. Faith is a gift. We must be "born again" (Jn. 3:3). Because we were not seeking Jesus, the Lord came to seek and to save us (Lk. 19:10). Read Ezekiel 36:22-32 and you will discover that Israel's future salvific restoration is related to God's covenant promise to save His people from their sins, and has nothing to do with Israel's faithfulness to God. God is going to restore a wicked people, not a righteous one. God saved you and I while we were yet sinful (Rom. 5:8). Ezekiel 37 explains how this happens. It is God who raises the spiritually dead and gives life to Israel's bones. He alone speaks life into these dead spiritual corpses ruined by sin. Praise God for His amazing grace! In the future, the Twelve Tribes of Israel will experience God's amazing grace, just as the prophets foretold!

While it's true that Israel's initial hardening was related to unbelief (Heb. 3:18-19), God's rejection is only temporary or partial (Rom. 11:25). During the period of Israel's separation, Gentile branches are grafted into Israel's tree, and when the church is complete, the Lord will remove ungodliness from Jacob and the remainder of Israel's elect will be saved. During the Tribulation at least 144,000 Jews from all Twelve Tribes will come to know their Messiah (Rom. 11:26; Rev. 7:4). It's likely that the "all" in Rom. 11:26 is a reference to thousands more from all Twelve of these Tribes. Clearly *all* cannot mean every single Jew alive at the time, because the promise has always been to the remnant of true believers (Isa. 10:21-22; 37:31; Rom. 11:5), not to every single person ever

born. Personally, I am uneasy about views that hold to replacement theology because the Scriptures do not conclusively support it. The empirical evidence alone favors God's preservation of Israel. If God were not *for* Israel, such a small nation should have been annihilated by its enemies long ago. But the reverse is true! Despite all odds, God has preserved this people and will fulfill His promises to Israel. He keeps His covenant; and He is faithful to do so even when we are faithless (2 Tim. 2:13; Gen. 15:1-21). If this were not true we would all be damned to hell for various acts of disobedience.

Another reason why I believe God's blueprint for the church is distinct from His program with Israel is related to the "administration of God's mystery" (Eph. 3:9), which Paul calls the church (Eph. 5:32). The mystery about the kingdom of God is that between the 69th and 70th weeks of Daniels prophecy (Dan 9:24-27) the church would emerge as God's people on earth (Rom. 11:25; Eph. 3:3-4). At the end of the 69th week, the Messiah would be "cut off," referring to the death of Christ. Following Christ's death, burial and resurrection, the church would be established! Since Israel delivered their Deliverer into the hands of Roman executioners, the Lord has temporarily broken off the natural branches and grafted in the Gentiles. The nation Israel has been temporarily set aside for now. The church age is the "mystery" spoken by Paul. Jesus explained to His disciples that He spoke to the Jews in parables for this very reason (Matt. 13:10-17; Mark 4:11-12). Paul put it this way: "*Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!*" (Rom. 11:12). The Book of Acts delineates this progression of the church's advancement, from Jew (Acts 2), to Samaritan (Acts 8), to Gentile (Acts 10ff). People groups who at one time hated one another are now being united together in Christ in this new *ecclesia* called the church (Eph. 2:11-22).

While all believers need to be kind and gracious toward other Christians who hold various eschatological views that differ from their own, we do not need to compromise our convictions about Scripture. Sadly, however, my own pastoral experience has shown that few believers actually have any convictions about what the Scripture teaches concerning the future. They simply do not know, or have repeatedly heard bits and pieces from the different systems, causing them confusion. "*All I know,*" they say, "*is that Jesus is coming again!*" While that may be the most important truth to hang on to, below is a brief summary of some of the more popular positions. Perhaps they will help to clarify the "bits and pieces" and provide a foundation for your own eschatological study.

The **Preterist** position believes that the prophetic passages being discussed above have already been fulfilled in the past. *Wikipedia*, the online internet encyclopedia, describes preterism as "an interpretation of [Christian eschatology](#) which holds that most or all of the [biblical prophecies](#) concerning the [End Times](#) refer to events which have already happened in the [1st century after Christ's birth](#). The system also claims that [Ancient Israel](#) finds its [continuation or fulfillment](#) in the [Christian church](#) at the [destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70](#)."

Continued on Page 4

Notes from the Pastor

Continued from Page 3

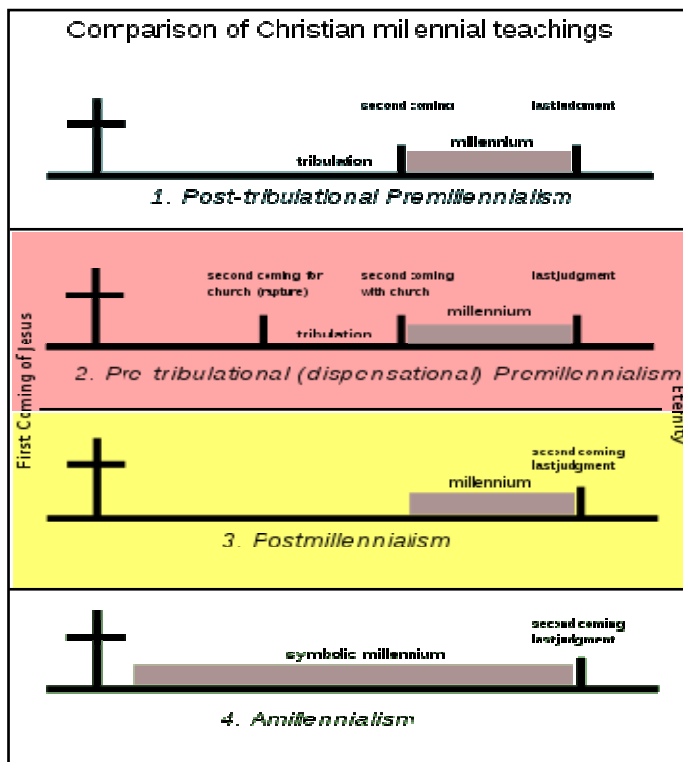
The term preterism comes from the Latin *praeter*, which is listed in Webster's 1913 dictionary as a prefix denoting that something is "past" or "beyond," signifying that either all or a majority of Bible prophecy was fulfilled by AD 70."

Premillennialism believes that Jesus will return before setting up His 1000-year rule and reign on earth. During the Millennium, Satan and his demons will be bound and global peace will exist on this planet. Specific interpretations vary as to the exact timing of the Rapture and Second Coming. Will Christ come back at the beginning, middle, pre-wrath, or end of the Tribulation period. Is the church going to endure God's catastrophic judgments or escape? Historic Premillennialism is a post-tribulational position that the Rapture and return of Christ will occur prior to the literal 1000-year reign, but subsequent to the Great Apostasy and Tribulation.

Amillennialism is the belief that Premillennialists are wrong; there will not be a future 1000-year kingdom on earth but a figurative period of unspecified time of Christ ruling in the hearts of men from heaven. They hold to the view that the church will endure great tribulation before the Second Coming, the final Judgment, and the inauguration of the new heavens and earth. This position is prone to using the allegorical method of biblical interpretation, especially when interpreting prophetic Scripture and the Book of Revelation. Therefore, the finer points of Amillennialism will differ from scholar to scholar since an allegorical understanding is quite subjective and left to the meanings and imaginations of the interpreter.

Postmillennialism believes that Jesus will return to earth after a period of Christian prosperity and dominance (Millennium). Although some postmillennialists hold to a literal millennium of 1,000 years, most see the thousand years as a figurative term for a long period of time. Postmillennialism also teaches that the forces of [Satan](#) will gradually be defeated by the expansion of the [Kingdom of God](#) throughout history up until the [Second Coming of Christ](#). Advocates for Reconstructionist Postmillennialism believe that Christians should seek to change the legal and political structures of our day to reflect the ideals of Scripture; that society should be governed exclusively by the Law of God (Dominion Theology). Many postmillennialists also adopt some form of [preterism](#), which holds that many of the end-time prophecies in the Bible have already been fulfilled.

In addition to the various views about the Eschaton (End Times), the term Covenant Theology is often associated with some of the positions held by sincere Christians. Frequently, covenant theology is often pitted against dispensationalism as the correct system for understanding the Scripture. *Wikipedia* describes Covenant Theology, "As a framework for biblical interpretation, that stands in contrast to [dispensationalism](#) in regard to the relationship between the [Old Covenant](#) with national Israel and the [New Covenant](#) in [Christ's blood](#)." This framework is divided into



three specific covenants; the covenant of redemption, the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace. Covenant theologians believe that God's dealings with mankind (including Israel) fall under one of these three covenants. Additionally, while covenant theologians would deny that God has abandoned His promises to Israel, they would see the fulfillment of those promises culminating in Jesus Christ (Mat. 5:17). Therefore, by virtue of one's faith in Jesus, the spiritual blessings of God's promises to Israel are enjoyed by every single believer belonging to God's universal church. Unfortunately, a detailed discussion related to the particulars of Covenant Theology, or any of these positions, is beyond the purview of this article.

Dispensationalism in its various forms embraces a literal, historical, grammatical hermeneutic (a way of interpreting Scripture) that views the progress of revelation, including New Testament revelation, such that it does not cancel Old Testament promises made with national Israel. Only Dispensationalism clearly sees a distinctive future for ethnic Israel as a nation. Adherents to this system of interpretation believe the church does not replace Israel, and that it is never referred to as Israel in Scripture. According to dispensationalists, the church did not exist in the Old Testament and did not begin until the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Charles Ryrie summarized the theology of dispensationalism as "1) A distinction between Israel and the church; 2) The consistent use of a literal hermeneutic; and 3) A view which sees the glory of God as the underlying purpose of God in the world."

As if all these systems and eschatological positions were not confusing enough, the Word of Faith Movement has further clouded our understanding of the Eschaton by claiming that the future heavenly promises related to health, wealth and prosperity are supposed to be realized now; that poverty, sickness, suffering and death are satanic attacks that should have

Continued on back page

FIDELIS

NOTES

By Doris Kahler

Fidelis Missionary/Pastoral Supply is a designated fund in our Church budget, totally dependent on free-will offerings. Our group makes items requested by mission hospitals and our local nursing homes, and collects various items needed by missionaries, Christian schools, and other Christian organizations. We also raise funds and collect items to assist with local area ministries such as the Pregnancy Resource Center (PRC), Child Evangelism, and Columbia Gorge Young Life.

We use:

- Lots of old, part-cotton sheets of any color or design for roller bandages and wipes for mission hospitals.
- New or good used baby clothing and blankets for the PRC and mission hospitals.
- Fabrics for making clothing protectors, wheelchair arm bags, neck pillows, therapy cubes, and walker bags for nursing homes.
- Health care items such as cotton balls or rolls, sterile and non-sterile exam gloves, 4"x4" gauze pads, and adhesive tape for mission hospitals.
- Cancelled stamps, which will be sent where they can be sold to collectors to raise funds for missions.
- Christian literature, such as daily devotionals, magazines (please no *Guide Posts*), biographies, books, teaching materials, Bibles and Concordance. These will be sent to Christian Resources International, which will distribute them to missionaries all over the world.
- Monetary Donations. (Please make any checks out to First Baptist Church, and mark any funds for Fidelis.)

I just want to send a special "Thank You" to all those who have helped with our Fidelis ministry this year. We have been able to send funds and supplies to several of our missionaries, nursing homes, and to various other Christian ministries because of your participation. Please pray with us that we will continue to be able to bless these Christian workers through 2011 with continued prayer, supplies, and funds.

If you have any questions about our work, or would like to find out how you can help, please contact Doris Kahler at 541-386-5388.

Spotlight on Missions

By Marian Warrenka

Ellie & Lila
Quezada



From a recent prayer letter.

"As a Missionary Ventures family, we are celebrating the launching of Casa Compasiva—a "ministry birthed in the heart of God." You have already been hearing a lot about this lately, so for now I will just share two fabulous pieces of good news, both for Casa Compasiva and for our family.

1) As you know, we have been planning to rent a government DIF office and renovate it to suit our purposes for the birth center. It was a good plan and would have been a good location for us. However, a couple of weeks ago, the possibility of renting the former YWAM house dropped into our laps. Although not in the neighborhood that we had originally envisioned, the YWAM house would be far better suited to our needs—if we could only get it! So we communicated with the owners and we went to prayer...

This morning we finally got word that, yes, the owners have accepted our offer to rent their house, and they are very pleased at the prospect of their house being used in such a vital ministry to the women (and babies) of Oaxaca. So as you can imagine, we are thrilled!!! Praise God with us !! This is a move from good to great!!

This will save us thousands of dollars in renovation costs and allow us to get right to work in the proper location instead of starting temporarily in one place and then later having to move. Although the house is well cared for, it will still need some work to make it suitable for our purposes; however, mostly just paint, curtains, shelf-building, etc—nothing on the huge scale that we would have required for the DIF building. It is spacious, affording lots of room for pre-natal appointments, delivery rooms, post-partum recovery rooms, offices, classrooms, storage, midwives' quarters, and best of all five bathrooms!!

We can take possession of it the first of January, so we will be moved in and set up on time for our doula training course to begin January 13th and for the birth center to open on January 17th. Amazing!! God's timing, as always, is so perfect, and we are rejoicing in His perfect plan...

2) Joshua, our second-born, just proposed to and was accepted by the love of his life! (Both of them managed to come here for Christmas, thanks to God hearing many, many prayers.) Looks like wedding bells will be ringing next summer..."

Update

Nadine House—Praise God, she has received 75% of her support for going to Taiwan. Please continue to pray that the remainder of her support comes in as she prepares for the mission field.

First Baptist Church

1889 Belmont Dr.
Hood River, OR 97031



Annual Business Meeting & Potluck

Sunday, January 16th
After Church Service

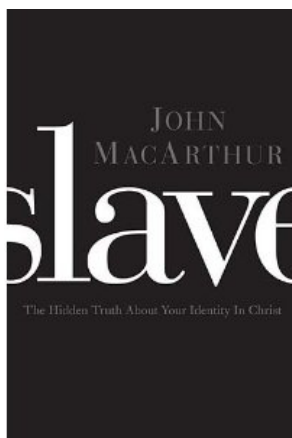


Book of the Month

"Slave" by John MacArthur

Throughout the Bible, followers of Jesus are commanded to submit to Him as their King. They are told to obey and follow, faithfully and without hesitation. Every time Christians utter the word *Lord*, they make a subtle yet profound declaration—that God is their Master and that they belong to Him. In fact, the Bible describes believers as His slaves. They have been bought with a price and now live for Christ as a people for His own possession.

But go into most churches today, even flip through most Bible translations, and you won't see or hear the word *slave* referring to Christians. That's because the word has been lost in translation. In this gripping book, Dr. John MacArthur uses the word of God and historical evaluation to expertly uncover the one forgotten word that restores the Bible's definition of true Christian freedom.



Continued from Page 4

no place in the believer's experience in Christ. Furthermore, these false teachers blame a Christian's sufferings and setbacks on one's lack of faith, rather than the decline, decay, and destruction caused by sin. The title and substance of Joel Osteen's best-seller, Your Best Life Now, is a reflection of this aberrant teaching, which simply must be rejected.

God's Word is the final authority in all matters relating to faith and practice, including our eschatological perspectives. While we all may take different end-time routes that get us to the finish line of glory, when we cross it here's what we will discover. "Behold, I am making all things new ... and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away. There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever." (Rev. 21:3-5; 22:3-5) "Behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book." Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done." (Rev. 22:7, 12) Yes, Jesus is coming again! Are you ready for His return?