

PURE IN HEART INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES, INC.

Expanded Statement of Faith

WE BELIEVE that only the sixty-six books of the Bible are the inspired, and therefore inerrant, Word of God. The Bible is the final authority for all we believe and how we are to live. [Matthew 5:18; John 10:35 and 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21]

WE BELIEVE that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, that He was conceived and born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, and offered Himself as a penal, substitutionary sacrifice for sinners. By His blood shed at the Cross, He obtained for us eternal redemption, the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting. He was raised bodily on the third day and ascended to the right hand of the Father, there to make intercession for the saints forever. [Matthew 1:18-25; John 1:1-18; Romans 8:34; 1 Corinthians 15:1-28; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:10-14; Ephesians 1:7; Philippians 2:6-11; Colossians 1:15-23; Hebrews 7:25, 9:13-15 and 10:19; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 1 John 2:1-2]

WE BELIEVE that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. No ordinance, ritual, work or any other activity on the part of man is required or accepted in order to be saved. This saving grace of God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, also sanctifies us by enabling us to do what is pleasing in God's sight in order that we might be progressively conformed to the image of Christ. [John 1:12-13, 6:37-44 and 10:25-30; Acts 16:30-31; Romans 3-4 and 8:1-17, 31-39 and 10:8-10; Ephesians 2:8-10; Philippians 2:12-13; Titus 3:3-7; 1 John 1:7, 9]

WE BELIEVE that the Lord Jesus Christ baptizes believers in the Holy Spirit, in whom we are also sealed for the day of redemption. The Holy Spirit regenerates, forever indwells, and graciously equips the Christian for godly living and service. Subsequent to conversion, the Spirit desires to fill, empower and anoint believers for ministry and witness. We also believe that signs and wonders, as well as all the gifts of the Spirit described in the New Testament, are operative today and are designed to testify to the presence of the Kingdom and to empower and edify the Church to fulfill its calling and mission. [Matthew 3:11; John 1:12-13 and 3:1-15; Acts 4:29-30; Romans 8:9 and 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Galatians 3:1-5; Ephesians 1:13-14 and 5:18]

WE BELIEVE that the one true God exists eternally in three persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—and that these, being one God, are equal in deity, power and glory. We believe that God not only created the world but also now upholds, sustains, governs and providentially directs all that exists and that He will bring all things to their proper consummation in Christ Jesus to the glory of His name. [Psalm 104 and 139; Matthew 10:29-31 and 28:19; Acts 17:24-28; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 1:9-12 and 4:4-6; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 1:4-6]

WE BELIEVE that when the Christian dies they pass immediately into the blessed presence of Christ, there to enjoy conscious fellowship with the Savior until the day of the resurrection and the glorious transformation of their body. The saved will then forever dwell in blissful fellowship with their great triune God. We also believe that when the unbeliever dies they are consigned to Hell, there to await the Day of Judgment when they shall be punished with eternal, conscious and tormented separation from the presence of God in the lake of fire. [Matthew 25:46; Luke 16:19-31; John 5:25-29; 1 Corinthians 15:35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10; Philippians 1:19-26 and 3:20-21; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; Revelation 20:11-15 and 21:1-22:15]

WE BELIEVE that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two ordinances of the Church to be observed until the time of Christ's return. They are not a means of salvation, but are channels of God's sanctifying grace and blessing to the faithful in Christ Jesus. [Matthew 26:26-29 and 28:19; Romans 6:3-11; 1 Corinthians 11:23-34; 1 Peter 3:21]

WE BELIEVE in the literal Second Coming of Christ at the end of the age when He will return to Earth personally and visibly to consummate His Kingdom. We believe that the Church will go through the Great Tribulation in great power and victory. We believe the Church will be raptured at the end of the Great Tribulation. We also believe in and are praying for a great end-time harvest of souls and the emergence of a victorious Church that will experience an unprecedented unity, purity and power in the Holy Spirit. [Psalms 2:7-9 and 22:27-28; John 14:12 and 17:20-26; Romans 11:25-32; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28, 50-58; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11; 2 Thessalonians 1:3-12; Revelation 7:9-14]

WE BELIEVE that Adam was originally created in the image of God, righteous and without sin. In consequence of his disobedience, Adam's posterity are born subject to both imputed and inherent sin, and are therefore by nature and choice the children of wrath, justly condemned in the sight of God, wholly unable to save themselves or to contribute in any way to their acceptance with God. [Genesis 1-3; Psalm 51:5; Isaiah 53:5; Romans 3:9-18 and 5:12-21; Ephesians 2:1-3]

WE BELIEVE that the Church is God's primary instrument through which He is fulfilling His redemptive purposes in the earth. To equip the saints for the work of ministry, God has given the Church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. We also affirm the priesthood of all believers and the importance of every Christian being joined with and actively involved in a local community of the saints. We believe that women, no less than men, are called and gifted to proclaim the Gospel and do all the works of the Kingdom. [Matthew 16:17-19; Acts 2:17-18, 42; Ephesians 3:14-21 and 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 2:11-15; Hebrews 10:23-25; 1 Peter 2:4-5 and 9-10]

WE BELIEVE that God has called the Church to preach the Gospel to all nations, and especially to remember the poor and to minister to their needs through sacrificial giving and practical service. This ministry is an expression of the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ and is an essential part of the Kingdom of God. [Isaiah 58:6-12 and 61:1; Matthew 5-7, 28:18-20; Luke 4:18 and 21:1-4; Galatians 2:10; 1 Timothy 6:8]

WE BELIEVE that Satan, originally the great and good angel Lucifer, rebelled against God, taking a multitude of angels with him. He was cast out of God's presence and is at work with his demonic hosts to establish his counter-kingdom of darkness, evil and unrest on Earth. Satan was judged and defeated at the cross of Christ and will be cast forever into the lake of fire which has been prepared for him and his angels. [Isaiah 14:10-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Matthew 12:25-29 and 25:41; John 12:31 and 16:11; Ephesians 6:10-20; Colossians 2:15; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Revelation 12:7-9 and 20:10]

Pure In Heart International Ministries 'View of the End-Times'

A. We do not ask anyone to quickly accept our views, rather we urge all involved with us to think for themselves as they search the Scripture. We are in pursuit of His knowledge and His will in our progressive growth and development, and require the Holy Spirit's help and your wisdom and patience concerning grasping these truths that require us all to seek Him. Truth is never hurt by careful scrutiny but rather it is confirmed. We encourage all in our spiritual family to boldly challenge the ideas that are being taught at PIHIM about the End-Times. We urge all to refuse any ideas that they cannot personally see in Scripture. The Bereans searched the Scriptures to see if the things that Paul said were so (Acts 17:10-11).

¹¹ These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. (Acts 17:11)

B. We study the End-Times because the generation in which the Lord returns is the most written about generation in Scripture. Over 100 chapters in the Bible have the End-Times as their main theme. Scripture gives significant divine info about the End-Times. Jesus spoke more about the last generation of natural history than the generation that He was born in. Why? To prepare the Bride to be victorious in love and power during the most dramatic time in world history.

C. We believe that that Lord may return within the lifetime of some people who are alive now. We do not know if the events leading to His return will begin in 5 years or 50 years. We assume that it is closer to 50 years than 5 years. We do not know because Jesus said that no one knows the day or the hour. However, Scripture requires those in the generation that the Lord returns to know the prophetic signs and to respond appropriately.

³² Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. ³³ So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near--at the doors! (Mt. 24:32-33)

D. Jesus and Paul emphasized the know-ability of the prophetic signs of the End-Times (Mt. 24:32-34; Lk. 21:25-29; 1 Thess. 5:1-6; 2 Thess. 2:1-11).

²⁵ There will be signs in the sun...and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations...²⁶ men's hearts failing them from fear...for the powers of heaven will be shaken. ²⁷ Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power...²⁸ Now when these things begin to happen, look up (have a heavenly perspective) and lift up your heads (be encouraged in faith), because your redemption draws near... (Lk. 21:25-28)

¹ Concerning the times and the seasons, you have no need that I should write to you. ² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night...⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. ⁵ You are all sons of light and sons of the day... ⁶ Therefore...let us watch... (1 Thess. 5:1-6)

E. God promised to give prophetic signs in the generation that the Lord returns as an expression of His mercy, so people can make the necessary preparations for what is coming. These prophetic signs serve the Church like a weather station that signals trouble before it comes so people can prepare and save lives. The example of the Southeast Asia Tsunami caused

by the Sumatra earthquake on Dec. 26, 2004 illustrates this. Most of those who died could have been saved simply by knowing an hour earlier that the tsunami was coming.

F. Jesus rebuked for being unable to read the prophetic signs at Jesus' first coming (Mt. 16:3). Jesus taught that came under judgment for being unresponsive to God because they did not know the time of their visitation from God.

⁴³For days will come...when your enemies will...44 level you, and your children to the ground...because you did not know the time of your visitation. (Lk. 19:43-44)

G. **The principle of God's love in judgment:** God uses the least severe means to reach the greatest number of people at the deepest level of love without violating anyone's free will in training the future rulers of the earth. The purpose of God's judgments is to remove all that hinders love so that multitudes would be saved and grow mature in love.

II. Four Common lies related to End-Time prophecy

A. The first common lie is that End-Time prophecy is not relevant, but is only for the curious. Gaining understanding about the End-Times is a key to preparing the Church to be victorious in the greatest time of pressure ever seen in history. It provides us with a compass in the storm. Having understanding about the End-Times will be an issue life or death to many in that hour.

B. The second common lie is that most End-Time prophecy is to be interpreted symbolically instead of taken literally. The events and numbers in Revelation are to be understood in their plain meaning (literal) unless the Scripture specifically indicates that they are symbolic as in Rev. 1:20; 5:6; 11:8; 12:1, 3, 9; 17:7, 9.

C. The third common lie is that End-Time prophecies are impossible to understand except only by scholars. The Scriptures on the End-Times were written to be understood by all. The majority of people throughout history have been uneducated peasants. The Scripture was written for their edification, not just for scholars.

D. The fourth common lie of End-Time prophecy is that the Church in every generation believed they were the final generation. It is true that small numbers (probably less than 1%) of many generations thought they were at the end. Only in the generation of the early apostles was there a universal sense among the majority of God's people in a long-term way that they would see the return of Jesus. This is beginning to happen again in the Body of Christ across the earth for only the second time in history.

III. Apostolic Pre-Millennialism

A. We use the term "apostolic" as an adjective to describe the vision, values, and perseverance (in persecution) of the New Testament Church, as raised up under the leadership of the first century apostles. In other words, Apostolic Christianity embraces a New Testament lifestyle. (Note: we are not using the term as a noun, thus referring to modern day apostles).

B. "Apostolic eschatology" speaks of a view of the End-Times that reflects the vision, power and lifestyle of the New Testament Apostolic Church. Apostolic eschatology will equip believers for apostolic (New Testament) lifestyles and perspectives in the midst of the coming great revival and persecution. I refer to apostolic eschatology as "***Apostolic Pre-Tribulation/Pre-Millennialism.***" This view calls the Church to victory, wholeheartedness and relevance.

C. Apostolic Christianity or New Testament Christianity will emerge in the End-Times as the Spirit raises up a victorious Church that operates in unprecedented unity, intimacy and maturity (Eph. 4:13), which includes a significant release of the Holy Spirit's gifts, fruit, and wisdom (Eph. 4:13; 5:27; Matt. 16:18; 22:37; Jn. 17:21-26; Rev. 19:7; 12:11; 15:2).

1. **A victorious Church** attains to unity, intimacy and maturity resulting in the greatest revival in history as it is led by the five-fold ministry (Eph. 4:11-13; 5:27). The praying End-Time Church will walk in power and revelation as it is used by the Holy Spirit to bring in the great End-Time Ingathering of souls.

¹¹He gave...apostles, some prophets...12...equipping of the saints...13 till we ALL come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge (intimacy) of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the...stature of the fullness of Christ (maturity). (Eph. 4:11-13)

2. **A wholehearted Church** walks in "Sermon on the Mount lifestyles" of self-denial and serving, giving, blessing, praying and fasting as seen in the New Testament Church (Mt. 5-7). This discipleship lifestyle of "happy holiness"

will be energized by bridal intimacy and an ever-deepening experience with Jesus as the Bridegroom God (Rev. 22:17). In the End-Times, the Church will be purified in the context of the great revival and pressure resulting in the separation of true believers from compromising ones.

27 That He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. (Eph. 5:27)

3. ***A relevant Church*** understands the value of our present labors in three ways. First, in seeing how they benefit people now in winning the lost, preparing the Church as End-Time forerunner messengers, and releasing God's justice (judgments) against evil by intercessory worship (Ps. 149:6-9). Second, seeing the continuity of our labors now to our life in the age-to-come. In other words, some of our present impact in society (releasing justice in legislation, education, technology, scientific advancements, etc) will have continuity in the Millennium by continuing after Jesus returns. Third, in seeing how our current labors of love will impact our personal eternal rewards and ministry assignment in the Millennial Kingdom.

IV. What is Apostolic Christianity?

A. ***It is Church centered*** - Jesus is building a Church that will openly triumph over the all the powers of hell (Mt. 16:18). The New Testament presents salvation in context to the Church as a spiritual family that walks out love, which honors all its members (i.e., gender, age, ethnic, economic, etc.).

B. ***It results in wholeheartedness*** - as it embraces holiness and discipleship. In other words, the fasted lifestyle is described in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7). It resists the "pleasure seeking Western Church culture" that results in "lazy friendly churches" that refuse self-denial and commitment. Apostolic Christianity receives God's blessing (prosperity) as a means to increase God's Kingdom rather than to live as "consumer Christians" that use most of their resources to live extravagantly.

C. ***Its ministries flow from intimacy with God*** - our ministries can only operate in fullness as we flow from a foundation of intimacy with fasting and prayer (*intercession, worship, intimacy with the Bridegroom God*) that contends (*fight*s) for the release of the Spirit's power (Rev. 22:17; Jude 3).

D. ***It possesses a missionary spirit*** - our inheritance is to be effective in the harvest and to make an impact on society (*Cultural Mandate*) with righteousness and justice in social institutions (*government, economics, education, technology, media, etc.*). There is continuity of some of our labors in the Millennial Kingdom.

E. ***It embraces persecution*** - as a part of spiritual warfare (Col. 1:24; 2 Cor. 11-12).

F. ***It engages in God's purpose for*** - the salvation of is a foundational aspect of God's End-Time drama. Jews and Gentile believers will come together as One New Man (Eph. 2:15) with a profound unity that matures in context to the unique dynamics of the End-Times. Will be provoked to jealousy (Rom. 11:11, 14) by an anointed apostolic Church that stands with them in context to anti-Semitism and persecution. The End-Time falling away will be related to this (2 Thess. 2:3).

G. ***It is led by apostolic ministry*** - God will restore the 5-fold ministry (Eph. 4:11-13).

V. The Millennial Kingdom

10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Matt. 6:10)

A. The Millennium is a literal 1,000-year period in which Jesus will rule the whole world from Jerusalem in righteousness, peace and prosperity (Rev. 20:1-6). The result will be unprecedented blessing for the whole earth as Jesus restores the agriculture, atmosphere, and animal life, etc.

B. At this time the Kingdom of God is openly manifest worldwide affecting every sphere of life (political, economic, spiritual, educational, agricultural, family, media, arts, technology, athletics, environment, social institutions, etc). This period of worldwide blessing is initiated by Jesus' Second Coming and binds Satan (Rev. 20:1-6; Is. 2:1-4; 9:6-9; 11:1-16; 51:1-8; 60-62; 65:17-25; Ps. 2:6-12; 110:1-7; Deut. 8; 28; Mt. 5:5; 6:10; 17:11; 19:28; 28:19; Acts 1:6; 3:21).

C. Jesus as King of Kings, will personally govern a worldwide Kingdom from Jerusalem in partnership with resurrected saints who rule with Him in establishing a biblically based, social order (Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4-6; 22:5; Mt. 19:28; 20:21-23; 25:23; Lk. 19:17-19; 22:29-30; 1 Cor. 6:2-3; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rom 8:17).

VI. End-Times (eschatology) - why does it even matter?

A. **Ideas have consequences** - God gave us information about the End-Times to describe what the Church attains to before and after Jesus' Coming. Our view of the End-Times affects our ministry focus, prayer life and lifestyle. Wrong views hinder our ministry focus and thus, effectiveness. Everyone has a view of the End-Times. Most have not clarified their views.

B. Often people accept one of three extremes.

1. First, being ***too negative*** in thinking the Great Tribulation will be so bad that nothing will change for good. This view leads people to draw back from seeking to change society. They say, "Why should we exert effort to bring change if the change will not last?"

2. Second, being ***too positive*** in thinking that most of society will be transformed before Jesus returns. This view ignores what Scripture says about the coming pressures and the necessity of Jesus' personal return to establish the fullness of the Kingdom. Hope-filled desire is important, however, it must be tempered by Scripture and not humanistic optimism. We must be loyal to God's wisdom in Scripture. Exaggerated optimism often ignores or explains away the negative specific details of End-Time prophecy.

3. Third, being ***too vague*** assuming that it is impossible to know what the Scripture says about the End-Times. Thus, they ignore the subject and let the future take care of itself without preparing for it. Many assume nothing dramatic will happen (2 Pet. 3:3).

VII. Three approaches to End-Time prophecy (as related to the Millennium)

A. **Pre-Millennialism** - teaches that Jesus returns **BEFORE** (pre-) His 1,000 year rule on earth. This is the only view that interprets End-Time prophecy in a literal or face value way.

B. **A-Millennialism** - means "**No-Millennium**." This view teaches that Jesus' 1,000-year reign is not a literal earthly reign, but rather it is a spiritual victory over sin in the heart of the believer. Millennial prophecies are interpreted as currently being fulfilled in the Church's war against sin.

C. **Post-Millennialism** - teaches that Jesus will come back **AFTER** (post-) the Millennium. This view teaches that the Church establishes the Millennial Kingdom by fully Christianizing the whole world before Jesus returns. This is idealism and optimism that goes beyond Scripture.

VIII. Amillennial view of the Kingdom of God

A. ***The strength of this view*** is its focus on the spiritual triumph of the Church over sin and Satan before the Lord returns.

B. ***The weaknesses of this view*** are found in usually interpreting most End-Time prophecy as symbolic or figurative (instead of literal) and in embracing replacement theology (*the Church replaces as heir to 's prophetic promises*).

C. Most Amillennialists and Post-Millennialists have the preterist view of the End-Times. Preterism is a term referred to in many eschatology books. A preterist is one with interest in the past. A preterit is a verb tense that describes a past action or condition (a verb in the preterit form).

D. Preterists usually do not believe in an End-Time Tribulation nor interpret the Book of Revelation in a literal way. Preterism sees most of the prophecies of the book of Revelation (Tribulation, Armageddon, Antichrist, False Prophet, etc.) as being completely fulfilled in an earthly way when Israel was at war with Rome (66-70 AD) and/or seeing them as partly symbolic (*as a picture of spiritual conflict throughout Church history*). Israel's war with the Roman Empire led to over one million Jews being killed and Jerusalem and its Temple being destroyed under General Titus in 70 AD.

E. Amillennialists see the prophecies of Mt. 24 and Lk. 21, as being completely fulfilled in 70 AD. It is true that the events of 70 AD were a partial fulfillment of these prophecies. However, they were meant to be understood also as a significant prophetic foreshadowing of End-Time events.

F. Most Amillennialists are what I call "eschatological cessationists" that do not believe the power of God will be manifest in the events related to the Great Tribulation and the establishing of the Millennium. Preterists have a ***domesticated***

eschatology that reduces most of the literal manifestations of God's power and judgments in Revelation to symbolism. Preterists also approach many Old Testament prophecies by either spiritualizing them (seeing them as symbolic) or simply ignoring them (*without even attempting to see their fulfillment in 70 AD*).

²⁴ **Jesus answered and said to them (Sadducees), "Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God?" (Mark 12:24)**

G. Amillennialists usually limit the Kingdom of God on the earth as being mostly in the heart of a believer. Most Amillennialists do not emphasize a large ingathering of souls in the End-Times nor the restoration of the 5-fold ministry (Eph. 4:11-13), nor the gifts of the Spirit.

H. Amillennialism is mostly held by those with reformed theology. Amillennialists through history believed in a Great Tribulation with a literal Antichrist. However, today most Amillennialists reject this. Also, those with this view usually lack a strong emphasis on the Cultural Mandate to impact society. Amillennialists and Post-Millennialists believe in the victorious Church yet in different degrees and emphases.

IX. Post-Millennial view of the Kingdom of God

A. **The strength of this view** is found in their zeal for the Cultural Mandate or for transforming society and its laws (*political, economic, education, media, arts, etc.*).

B. **The weakness of this view** has similarities with Amillennialists in usually interpreting most End-Time prophecy as symbolic instead of literal and in embracing replacement theology. Most Post-Millennialists have the preterist view of Revelation which sees most of its prophecies and Mt. 24 and Lk. 21 as being fulfilled in 's war with Rome (66-70 AD), instead of being understood as a partial fulfillment and also a prophetic foreshadowing of End-Time events.

C. Jesus first endured the cross and so will His Church before the fullness of God's promise are released on earth. Peter rebuked Jesus for choosing the cross. Jesus rebuked him for being filled with humanistic thinking that was inspired by Satan. Peter's mindset is still in the Church today.

²⁰ **Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem ...and be killed...22 Peter...began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You...this shall not happen to You!" 23 He said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." 24 Jesus said... "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me...27 The Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father...then He will reward each according to his works. (Mt. 16:20-27)**

D. The zealots of Jesus' day made the same mistake in expecting 's Messianic Kingdom on earth to be established without the Messiah dying. They were offended at the idea of the cross being necessary. The same offense with the cross is true today with many Post-Millennialists, who are expecting the Church to usher in the fullness of God's kingdom on earth without being purified by the eschatological dimensions of the cross in the Tribulation (Dan. 11:33-35; 12:10).

E. Some refuse the plain teaching of Scripture that the whole human race and all creation will endure the birth pangs that usher in the age to come. We must refuse all theological systems that claim more compassion and optimism (victory) than God's plan that requires the Tribulation.

F. Post-Millennialism is an overly optimistic eschatology. It was most popular during the Victorian age (approximately 1840-1900) when the Holy Spirit was focusing on restoring in the Church the truths of social action and human rights. Many believers thought things would just get better and better until Jesus returned. However, the reality of two world wars in the 20th century caused Post-Millennialism to fall out of favor worldwide. For example, Wheaton College was founded with Post-Millennial views, but switched to Pre-millennialism after the two world wars clearly contradicted Post-Millennial optimism. Some Post-Millennialists believed in a literal 1,000-year reign of the Spirit in the Church before Jesus' Second Coming. The distinction between Amillennialism and post-Millennialism is not as clear in history as some suggest. Amillennial and Post-Millennial camps differ on the measure and way that the Church takes over society. In the 1600s, the consensus of the Puritans believed in 's salvation (yet without being restored to their land). Most Puritans were post-Millennial. Both Amillennial and Post-Millennial theologians claim Jonathan Edwards.

X. The Pre-Millennial view of the Kingdom of God

A. Pre-Millennialists believe that Jesus will return to rule the earth for a Millennium (1,000 years). The strength of this view is found in its literal interpretation of End-Time prophecy.

B. Three views of Pre-Millennialism:

1. **Dispensational Pre-Millennialism** (pre-tribulation rapture)
2. **Historic (classic) Pre-Millennialism** (post-tribulation rapture). Pre-Wrath and/or Mid-Tribulation have similar strengths and weaknesses as this position.
3. **Apostolic Pre-Millennialism** combines the biblical strengths of the other eschatological positions. It understands the End-Times from the perspective of the values, vision, and power of the New Testament Church in the midst of world crisis and persecution.

XI. Dispensational Pre-Millennialism

A. This is the most popular eschatology today. It is called dispensational because they teach that God has related differently to His people in seven different dispensations or seasons of history. The different dispensations speak of different stages in God's plan of salvation through history.

B. **The strength of this view** is found in its literal interpretation of End-Time prophecy and in embracing God's purpose for in the End-Times.

C. **The weakness of this view** is its error that the complacent church abdicates its responsibility to pray, "be" a witness, and win lost souls for Christ, because of apathy and cultural conformity.

1. First, it undermines the need to urgently prepare the Church for the hardship and persecution of the end-times. It does not see the role of Gentile believers to provoke to jealousy and salvation by standing with them in persecution while functioning as an anointed apostolic Church.
2. Second, with its doctrine of immanency (*Jesus returning any moment*), some do not emphasize the need for a long-term plan for their life or ministry, nor a commitment to impact society. Thus, those with this view usually neglect the Cultural Mandate.
3. Third, it often minimizes the certainty of the End-Time Ingathering of souls.

D. **Summary:** it neglects to prepare the Church for persecution and to stand during the great darkness of the end-times, by not actively seeking breakthroughs in transforming society, and it minimizes the certainty of the End-Time harvest. Thus, it is an overly pessimistic eschatology.

E. The common response is escapism (*why bother if we will soon be raptured*) along with fatalism and defeatism (*society cannot be effectively changed*). This view usually sees the Church's mandate as being like a life raft limited to delivering people from drowning (preaching only salvation) while abdicating the rest of society to the devil with its overly pessimistic future.

F. This view can lead to a lazy disengagement (complacency) instead of urgency to be prepared in prayer with fasting as we seek for spiritual breakthroughs in the Kingdom. Note: some Dispensational Pre-Millennial churches are very active in soul winning.

XII. Historic (Classic) Pre-Millennialism

A. **The strength of this view** is found in its literal interpretation of End-Time prophecy, in preparing the Church for future persecution and in our responsibility to provoke to salvation.

B. **The weakness of this view** is found in lacking the assurance of a victorious Church functioning in her bridal identity (Rev. 22:17), a large End-Time Ingathering of souls, and the Cultural Mandate. Therefore, it does not usually emphasize intimacy with God, or the need for night and day intercession, or the certainty of an End-Time victorious Church. A few with this view do see a measure of victory in the Church.

C. Historic (classic) premillennialism (post-tribulation) has similar strengths and weaknesses as Pre-Wrath and/or Mid-Tribulation Premillennialism. (J. O. Bengel wrote a classic book on Historic Pre-Millennialism, as did George Ladd).

XIII. Apostolic Pre-Millennialism: Confronting 4 deceptions in the Church

A. **“Lazy-friendly” spiritual culture** that is currently seducing the Western Church by its casual view of compromise and a false view of eternal security that does not depend on vibrant faith. All have an eschatology even if it is simply to be happy with and have an easy life. This view of the future is the most popular one and will please many people, be very popular and will make one many friends, however, we desire to be an oracle of God not man pleasers.

B. **Replacement theology** that denies Israel's place in God's purpose.

C. **Prayerless cessationism** that believes that the gifts of the Spirit and the five-fold ministry have ceased, therefore, they do not contend in prayer with fasting for their full release.

D. **Symbolic interpretation of most End-Time prophecy** that significantly reduces, dismisses, or ignores the literal, future events in the End-Time drama. This approach to Scripture fuels a scoffing spirit of unbelief and hardness of heart (2 Pet. 3:3; Mk. 16:14; Lk. 24:25, 38).

XIV. The Great Tribulation was not fulfilled in 70 AD (Mt. 24:21)

¹⁵ **Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place...21 then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 Unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved (physically spared); but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. (Mt. 24:15, 21-22)**

A. Jesus prophesied that the Great Tribulation would be the most severe time in history. It will surpass all other times of crisis. Some seek to minimize this prophecy by reducing it to symbolism or by seeing it as being fulfilled in 70 AD. The Great Tribulation will be so severe that God shortened it to 3½ years to keep the entire human race from being physically killed.

B. The events of 70 AD were a prophetic foreshadowing of the Tribulation. Yet, they did **not** fulfill most of scriptural details of the Tribulation. The Tribulation will threaten the life of every human being (Mt. 24:22) and will not occur until after the abomination of desolation, which is described in Rev. 13. The scriptural details of the Great Tribulation require a talking image, the mark of the Beast, a healed head wound, mandatory worship of the Antichrist worldwide and a False Prophet. Nothing close to this happened in the Jewish Revolt against Rome (66-73 AD). In this crisis, Jerusalem and the Second Temple were destroyed in 70 AD. Then in 132-135 AD, the Jews revolted against Rome again, resulting in 500,000 Jews being killed and 1000 villages being destroyed. In World War II, 50 million died which far surpassed the one million deaths (70 AD). Neither 70 AD nor World War II came close to threatening the existence of the human race as the Great Tribulation will. Neither of these terrible times were the worst time in history, and neither involved the Abomination of Desolation in the Jerusalem Temple (Rev. 13:14-17). The 50 million babies aborted each year worldwide overshadows both 70 AD and WWII.

XV. THE BRIDEGROOM MESSAGE IS A CALL TO ACTIVE INTIMACY WITH GOD

¹⁰ **The Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God...12 we have received...the Spirit...that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. (1 Cor. 2:10-12)**

A. The Bridegroom message is a call to active intimacy with God. The Bridal message speaks of God's invitation for us to experience the deep things of His heart (emotions, affections). To enjoy active intimacy with Jesus includes feeling His heart for us. The Bridal message speaks of experiencing Jesus' emotions (desire, affections).

¹⁸ **You may be able to comprehend.... the width and length and depth and height-- to know the love of Christ... (Eph 3:18-19)**

B. To understand Jesus as a passionate Bridegroom is to soon see ourselves as a cherished Bride. Intimacy causes our hearts to be lovesick for Jesus (inflamed; enraptured; overcome by His love). This prophecy emphasizes that we will “call out” in two different directions. First, we call out to Jesus in intercession to “come to us.” Second, we call out to people who thirst to “come to Jesus.” This cry renews believers and brings unbelievers to salvation

C. As sons of God, we are in the position to experience *God's Throne* as heirs of His power/authority (Rev. 3:21; Rom. 8:17). As the Bride, we are in position to experience *God's heart* (emotions, affections or desire for us). Both are unique positions of privilege before God.

D. As women are the sons of God, so men are the Bride of Christ. Both describe our position of privilege before God, rather than pointing to something that is intrinsically male or female. Most Christian women do not struggle with the idea of being sons of God because they do not see it as a call to be less feminine. However, often men struggle with being the Bride of Christ because they wrongly conclude that it is a call to become less masculine.

XVI. WHAT IS THE BRIDEGROOM MESSAGE?

A. The essence of the Bridegroom message is the revelation of Jesus' emotions and commitments as a Bridegroom God. God energizes us our spirit with passion for Him when we understand His devotion and commitment to us as seen in the cross.

B. The Bridegroom message includes the revelation of Jesus' emotions for us as a Bridegroom God. Jesus the Bridegroom is filled with tender mercy - He is gentle with our weakness. We often confuse rebellion and immaturity. God is angry at rebellion, but He has a heart of tenderness towards sincere believers that seek to obey Him. He enjoys us even in our weakness (Ps. 18:19, 35; 130:3-4). Knowing this makes us run to God instead of from Him when we see our sin and weakness.

C. Jesus the Bridegroom has a heart of gladness (happy heart) - Jesus had more gladness than any man in history (Heb. 1:9). Most of Church history has viewed God as mostly mad or mostly sad when He relates to us. However, Jesus is mostly glad when He relates to us, even in our weakness.

D. Jesus the Bridegroom has fiery affections - He has burning desire and longing for His people.

⁹ As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. (Jn. 15:9)

E. Jesus the Bridegroom is zealous - He destroys all that hinders love (Zech. 1:14; 8:2; Ezek. 38:18-19; Rev. 19:2; Prov. 6:34)

F. Jesus the Bridegroom possesses indescribable beauty - He fascinates our hearts (Ps. 27:4).

⁴ One thing I have desired of the LORD...to behold the beauty of the LORD... (Ps. 27:4)

G. What is the Bridal paradigm? The word paradigm means perspective or view. Thus, the Bridal paradigm refers to the "bridal perspective or view" of the kingdom of God. We see the Kingdom through the eyes of a wholehearted Bride with loyal devoted love that leads to holy obedience, soul winning and building up the Body of Christ. If we do not feel loved and in love we can still be born again. However, when we feel His love then we resist compromise with greater consistency.

XVII. THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE WORLDWIDE WILL CRY, "COME LORD JESUS"

A. Rev. 22:17 is one of the most informative and significant prophecies in the Bible describing the End-Time Church. John tells what will happen in the Church, in the generation the Lord returns.

¹⁷ The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!"...And let him who thirsts come...!"(Rev. 22:17)

B. This prophecy describes the Church in deep unity with the Holy Spirit, in saying and doing what the Holy Spirit is saying and doing. What is the Spirit doing in this passage? He is interceding for Jesus to come to His Church. What is the Spirit saying? He is revealing the Church's bridal identity (who we are as Jesus' Bride). In other words, the Word of God tells us what the Spirit of God will emphasize in the End-Times. There are many significant implications of this prophecy.

C. This prophecy describes the highest function of the Church in 4 ways: 1). **Anointed** with the Spirit, 2). **Engaged** in intercession, 3). **Established** in our bridal identity and 4). **Effective** in the Harvest. For the **first time** in history, the Church world wide, just prior to the return of Jesus will be in dynamic unity with the Spirit and therefore, the Spirit will be resting on and moving through the Church in great power. The Holy Spirit for the first time in history will universally emphasize the Church's spiritual identity as Jesus' Bride. Notice that John does not proclaim that the Spirit and the family say, "Come," nor the Spirit and the army, nor the kingdom, nor the body, nor the temple and not the Spirit and the priesthood. Rather, it is the

Spirit resting on the Church as a Bride. Forever, we rejoice in the reality of our identity as God's army, family, body, temple, priesthood and kingdom.

XIII. HOW TO INTERPRET THE SONG OF SOLOMON

A. **Natural interpretation:** this view depicts a natural love story between King Solomon and his bride, the Shulamite maiden. It emphasizes biblical principles that honor the beauty of love within marriage. This view has grown in popularity in the last 100 years and has many good commentaries. There are two basic story lines when interpreting the Song as a natural love story. The first tells of a Shulamite maiden who was wooed by the handsome and wealthy King Solomon who progressively wins her heart as the storyline unfolds. The second is the story of a godly Shulamite maiden who deeply loves a poor shepherd in her hometown (Shunem). King Solomon passed through her town and noticed her working in a vineyard. He was struck by her extraordinary beauty. Thus, he sought to steal her heart away from the poor shepherd that she loved. She remained loyal to the poor shepherd in the midst of the temptations of King Solomon's wealth and power.

B. **Spiritual interpretation:** this is a symbolic interpretation to see the spiritual truths in our relationship with Jesus behind the natural love story. This is the approach I will use in this study course. We study the Song to gain deeper understanding of our relationship with Jesus. This is the most common interpretation over the last 3000 years (since Solomon wrote this Song).

C. Jesus is exalted in the Song. He spoke of Himself from all the Scriptures to the disciples on the Emmaus road. He went through all 39 books of the OT to speak of Himself.

²⁷ He expounded...in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. (Lk. 24:27)

¹ The law (Old Testament), having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things... (Heb. 10:1)

D. The Spirit inspired all Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16) and exalts Jesus in all that He does.

¹⁴ He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. (Jn. 16:14)

E. The Spirit has deep friendship with Jesus and a fierce loyalty to fill people with love for Jesus. They have been together from eternity past. Thus, it is inconceivable for the Spirit to inspire a book in the Bible without Jesus being the predominant theme.

XIX. THE SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION: 3 COMMON APPROACHES

A. First, is the relationship between Jesus and the individual believer. This approach gives spiritual principles that aid us in our progression of holy passion. This is the way we approach this study.

B. Second, is the relationship between Jesus and His corporate Church throughout history.

C. Third, is the relationship between God as the Bridegroom and ethnic Israel as His Bride (Jer. 2:2; Hos. 2:16-20; Ezek. 16:8-14, 20-21, 32, 38; Is. 54:5-6). This was the primary approach of the scribes in OT times as well as with Jewish rabbis today.

D. We bless different interpretations as long as they exhort others to grow in wholehearted love for Jesus.

XX. ALL BELIEVERS ARE INCLUDED IN THE BRIDE

A. Theologically, all believers on earth are betrothed (engaged) to Jesus. In Hebrew tradition, an engaged couple was legally married and needed to be divorced if they broke their engagement (2 Cor. 11:2). The consummation of the marriage relationship occurs in the age to come (Rev. 19:7). I believe that the Bride of Christ is the entire Church from history that is filled with mature love. In the resurrection, the Spirit will bring God's work to completion in the whole church. In other words, every believer will experience a mature bridal relationship with Jesus.

B. First, the maturity of the Bride is ultimately the fruit of Jesus' work on the cross (Rom. 8:31-32). Second, in heaven there will be only one unified people, rather than two classes of believers. Jesus prayed that His people would be unified like the Father and the Son (Jn. 17:21). Third, we will be like Jesus when we see Him in glory. The impact of seeing God will release great power that will transform all believers in the age-to-come. When He is revealed we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. (1 John 3:2). Fourth, the Bride's destiny is ensured by God's ravished heart for her. His heart is ravished for all of His people (Song 4:9). God's heart is ravished for all the redeemed, not just for those who are spiritually mature during their brief time on the earth. Jesus is not more ravished for one group in the Church than He is for another group. Summary: the maturity of the Bride is based primarily upon Jesus' work on the cross, His intercession, the revelation of His glory, and His ravished heart for us.

C. The three main characters in the Song of Solomon

1. **King Solomon:** in the spiritual interpretation he is a picture of the triumphant resurrected Jesus Christ who is King of Kings. **Shulamite maiden:** in the spiritual interpretation she is a picture of the Bride of Christ. She is introduced as a young maiden who grows up to become a Bride in mature partnership with King Jesus. The Shulamite is mentioned once by name (6:13). She lived in Shunem (north of Jezreel). **Daughters of Jerusalem :** in the spiritual interpretation they speak of sincere yet spiritually immature believers. They look to the Shulamite for answers on how to grow close to the King. They are not an actual group that we can identify in history (they personify immature believers).

2. In the Song of Solomon, Solomon shows forth the joy of life that can be attained without regard to how our circumstances are going. In this book, the Holy Spirit is calling us to make intimacy with God the goal of our life. The Song highlights how full our life is when our consuming passion is to love and know Jesus. Even with hard circumstances, our spirit can be alive in God. Song of Solomon speaks of entering fulfillment through humility, obedience and the impartation of God's love. The Song of Solomon speaks of the spiritual pleasure of pursuing the best things found in heavenly life.

D. Allegorical interpretation

23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, 24 which things are symbolic (*figurative in NIV; allegorically speaking in NAS*). For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar-- 25 for this Hagar is Mount Sinai...and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children—26 but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. (Gal. 4:23-26)

1. The allegorical interpretation has been used in different ways through history. Paul's treatment of the Hagar-Sarah story is described by Paul as symbolic by the NKJV, as figurative by the NIV and as an allegory by the NAS.

2. Paul's use of the Sarah-Hagar story in Gal. 4:21-31 is more "figurative" (typology) instead of an "allegory." Paul's use of allegory differed greatly from Alexandrian allegory (first-century Philo as well as the third and fourth century Origen and Chrysostom).

3. The Alexandrians used allegory in a way that ignored its historical context and meaning. In 1 Cor. 9:9-10, Paul used an allegorical interpretation of the "muzzled ox" (Deut 25:4) to apply to the full-time workers in the gospel receiving finances.

4. An allegory is a fictional story with symbolic meaning without historical facts as its basis. An experience of this type of an allegory is seen in the book, The Chronicles of Narnia.

5. An allegory is a literary form where people or objects symbolically represent truths. Allegories illustrate truths to make them easier to understand. Our primary interpretation of Scripture must be the historical grammatical that takes the Scripture at face value. We approach the Scripture this way unless the Scripture indicates otherwise (Gal. 4:24; Jn. 15:1-6; Rev. 11:8; Isa. 5:1-7; Hos. 2:1-14; Ezek. 16; Dan. 7:2-8, 16).

6. Allegorical interpretations are helpful if we only use them to illustrate truths that are clearly established throughout the New Testament.

E. The theme of the Song of Solomon: to receive the kisses of God's Word

² ***Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth (Word)... (Song 1:2)***

1. We may cry "Father, let Jesus kiss me with the kisses of His Word." We ask for grace to receive the Word in a way that empowers us to love Jesus with all our heart so as to walk in holy obedience to the Word of God.

³⁷ ***Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." (Mt. 22:37)***

2. The Word of God is what proceeds from God's mouth. Our heart can only live by that which comes from God's mouth. Jesus quoted Deut. 8:3 in His temptation (Mt. 4:4). For 3,000 years, rabbis have referred to the "kisses of the mouth" in this verse as the "kiss of the Torah".

³ ***That He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. (Deut. 8:3)***

3. The theme of the Song is the Bride's cry for the kiss of God's Word to touch the deepest place in her heart. This refers to encountering the Word in the deepest and most intimate way. In other words, to receive the Word in a way that reveals the King's love for His Bride and awakens our heart in the 3-fold love of God (love from God then for God which overflows to others). Jesus is the Living Word. He is the Person who longs to be our "close friend" and who frees us from profound loneliness (Jn. 1:1).

4. The Divine kiss is a metaphor for intimacy with God. There are 3 metaphors of intimacy with God in the Song. The Divine kiss (1:2), the Divine seal (8:6), and the Divine embrace (2:5; 8:4).

5. We are to think of God's hand touching our heart by the Holy Spirit to expand our capacity to receive His love and to give ourselves back to Him in love. It speaks of God's invitation to go deep with Jesus. The kisses of His mouth speak of the release of God's Word that tenderizes our hearts in God's love. We want the deepest things that God will give the human spirit in this age.

6. We receive the kisses of God's Word by pray-reading God's Word or in meditation. In times of temptation, we speak this truth before the Lord. We say, "I will not yield to sin. Father let Him kiss my heart with the power of God's Holy Word.

7. We are **not** to think of kissing Jesus on the mouth. This is outside the boundaries of God's Word. We renounce all interpretations of the "kisses of the Word" that come from sensual imagination. The Word of God covers many different subjects such as relationship skills, financial blessing, ministry skills or apostolic strategies for outreach (Book of Acts). The Word as it pertains to growing in these skills and insights is valuable to us. In Song 1:2, the Bride cried out specifically to receive the Word of God in a way that would reveal and impart God's love to her heart.