

Objections to the Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment

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Introduction

Preterist and futurist scholars object to our doctrine of the Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment that began in heaven in 1844. Depending upon the scholar, their objections are chronological, contextual, and theological in nature. We will examine all of the major objections to this teaching and respond to each one.

Chronological Objections

Preterism

Preterist scholars apply the prophecies regarding the Antichrist to our distant past. Specifically, they reject our view that the Papacy is the Antichrist and instead teach that a type of the Antichrist is the subject of the prophecies in Daniel 7 and 8. The reasons for this view differs from scholar to scholar, although all of them emphasize that the prophecies must have made sense to the readers in the writer's day.

The earlier preterists did not deny the ability of the prophets to make predictive prophecy but simply believed the evidence from the prophecies themselves and from history point to Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a Seleucid king (based in Syria) who invaded Jerusalem in 171 B.C. and desecrated the Temple by erecting idols on its premises and offering a pig on the Altar of Burnt Offering before being expelled by a family of priests known as the Maccabees in 165 B.C.

More recent preterists tend to deny the ability of anyone to make predictive prophecy, so they insist that Daniel was written, or at least finished, by a second-century B.C. writer after the events rather than by Daniel, whose book claims to have been written in the sixth-century B.C.

One preterist scholar (Desmond Ford, died 2019), while denying he was a preterist at all, claims that the fulfillment of all Bible prophecies must be dated no later than the first century A.D. Therefore, he adopted the preterist view of Antiochus IV as the subject of Daniel 7 and 8.

The result of this preterist approach is a denial of the year-day principle and the interpretation of the time elements in these prophecies as referring to literal times.

Our Response

While it is admirable to attempt to make the prophecies relevant to God's people in the days of the writers, the fact is that Daniel was a sealed book until what it calls *the time of the end* (Daniel 12:4, 9), defined as a period of time that culminates in a time of trouble such as never was and in resurrection (Daniel 11:40-12:2). The fact that it was sealed allows for the fact that the book's prophecies extended far beyond the days of the writer while the rest of the Old Testament did not indicate that amount of time. As for Revelation, it borrows much from Daniel and is thus a companion book of Daniel, as all scholars acknowledge. Therefore, much of Revelation could not have been understood until Daniel was unsealed—again, allowing for Revelation's prophecies to extend far beyond the apostle John's day in the first century A.D. If that is so, then the time elements could be symbolic of much longer time periods on the basis of the year-day principle.

The denial of predictive prophecy by most modern preterists is simply baffling. If one believes in God, whose eternal nature means that He knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10), then naturally predictive prophecy is possible. Therefore, there is no automatic need to interpret these prophecies as describing events that have already occurred before they were written. Indeed, such writings are not prophetic at all. Moreover, Jesus believed that the sixth-century B.C. prophet Daniel wrote his book (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14).

As for Desmond Ford's view that all prophecies cannot have been fulfilled later than the first century A.D., let us examine his basis for that position. First, he asserts that the Old Testament makes no distinction between the First and Second Coming of Jesus. This is essentially true. If literal Israel had accepted Jesus as the Messiah, there would have been no need for a Second Coming. He could have set up His kingdom at His First Coming, resurrected the righteous, and fulfilled the events in that way without the need for a millennium in heaven. However, the book of Daniel was a sealed book and reveals that literal Israel would reject the Messiah and lose its most-favored nation status with God at the end of the 70 Weeks prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27). Dr. Ford seems to ignore the implications of this once-sealed book.

Second, Ford says that the New Testament anticipates Christ's Second Coming as imminent, meaning that it anticipated that event before or by the end of the first century A.D. Support for this include Jesus' own statement that *this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place* (Matthew 24:34; cf. Mark 13:30; Luke 21:32; Romans 13:11; I Corinthians 10:11; I Thessalonians 4:15-17).

It is true that the New Testament writers thought of the Second Coming as imminent. However, the idea that it was thought to occur before or by the end of the first century A.D. is completely an arbitrary assumption on the part of Dr. Ford. For example, when Jesus said that *this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place*, He may well have been referring to the

current generation, some of whom would see the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem (cf. vv. 1-3). The expression *these things* seems to be particularly associated with the destruction of the Temple in verse 3 compared with verses 1-2. Another possibility is that since the word for *generation* can mean a *country* or *nation*, that it means the organized people of God (the spiritual nation) who sees the last of the heavenly signs and understands them as such (Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:25) will also see the Second Coming, whether or not the specific individuals are still living at the Second Coming or not.

The Second Coming may have been referred to as imminent in the New Testament simply because Jesus' successful mission at His First Coming guaranteed that His Second Coming would occur. Thus, the Second Coming is pictured as imminent *theologically* rather than chronologically.

As a result of Ford's first two points, he concludes that all of the Old Testament and New Testament prophecies—including those in Daniel and Revelation—do not go beyond the first century A.D.

Again, we note that Daniel was a sealed book until *the time of the end* (Daniel 11:40-12:2, described as a period of time that culminates in a time of trouble such as never was and in resurrection (Daniel 12:1-2). The fact that it was sealed allows for the fact that the book's prophecies extended far beyond the first century A.D. while the rest of the Old Testament did not indicate that amount of time. As for Revelation, it borrows much from Daniel and is thus a companion book of Daniel, as all scholars acknowledge. Therefore, much of Revelation could not have been understood until Daniel was unsealed—again, allowing for Revelation's prophecies to extend far beyond the first century A.D. The fact that Revelation 1:1; 22:6-7, 12, 20 anticipates the events in that prophecy, including the Second Coming of Jesus, to be imminent can be understood as *theologically* soon in order to keep His people watching and in readiness for His return.

Futurism

Futurist scholars understand the Antichrist prophecies as only applying to the future at the end of the age. Therefore, they interpret the major prophecies of Daniel and Revelation to begin in the writer's day but quickly jump to the end-time. For example, they understand Daniel 7 to jump from the Roman Empire (the fourth beast) to the end-time, skipping any reference to the Church Age because they understand that Daniel 2's feet of ten toes and Daniel 7's ten horns to be equal to the time of the ten horns in Revelation 17, which refers to the Antichrist. They concur with the preterists that Daniel 8's little horn is Antiochus IV. In Revelation, dispensational futurists interpret everything after the messages to the Seven Churches, that is, everything from chapter 4:1 as applying to the end-time. As a result, they also view any time elements in these prophecies as expressions of literal time and deny the existence of the year-day principle.

Our Response

While we agree that Revelation 17 refers to the end-time phase of the Antichrist, there are two important differences between its ten horns and the time of the ten toes (Daniel 2:41-42) and the ten horns in Daniel 7 (vv. 7, 20, 24). In Revelation 17 the emphasis is on the complete voluntary unity of the ten horns in its support of the Antichrist (vv. 12-14). Even when they eventually turn against the Antichrist, they do so in unison (vv. 16-17). By contrast the feet of ten toes in Daniel 2 are specifically said to be like iron mixed with clay in that *they will not adhere to one another* (vv. 41-43). In Daniel 7 the emphasis is also on disunity, for the little horn will defeat three of the ten horns there. This leaves only seven horns during most of the little horn's domination. Even if one interprets the ten horns in either or both Daniel 7 and Revelation 17 as symbolic of a totality of kingdoms, seven is not the number ten. Therefore, Daniel 2 and 7 represent division and disunity while Revelation 17 represents complete voluntary unity. Thus, the periods represented by the feet and ten toes of Daniel 2 and of the ten horns in Daniel 7 are not equal to the period of the ten horns in Revelation 17. Instead, this period of time in Daniel 2 and 7 must refer to the period of disunity following the fall of the Roman Empire. Indeed, Europe has been divided ever since, just as the prophecy in Daniel 2 said it would (v. 43).

Regarding the book of Revelation, the basis for the futurist interpretation that everything from chapter 4:1 refers to the end-time is that the Seven Churches represent the entire Church Age. Thus, when its messages have been completed at the end of chapter 3, the remainder of Revelation must concern the end-time. This in turn is based on the formula in Revelation 1:19 as follows:

- *the things which you have seen* (past tense)
- *the things which are* (present tense)
- *the things which will take place after this* (future tense)

The *things which you have seen* refers to the vision of Jesus in Revelation 1:12-18, which we agree. The *things which are* refers to the Seven Churches, which we agree. And *the things which will take place after this* refers to things after the end of the Church Age. However, this last interpretation is not required because the application of the Seven Churches to the Christian Era is only an *implied* and thus *secondary* meaning. First, unlike the other series of specific sevens in Revelation (the Seven Seals, Seven Trumpets, and Seven Last Plagues), there is no language indicating a succession from one church to the next. It may be implied because the other series of sevens are successive in nature, but it is not explicitly stated. Second, we know that the messages to these seven churches applies to the entire Christian Era only because the examination of Church history reveals that it fits that history. Therefore, the things which will take place after the messages to the Seven Churches only indicates a time after the apostle John's day.

Further evidence that belies the futurist perspective is that Revelation's major sections are introduced by a scene from the heavenly sanctuary.

- First, Christ dressed partly as a priest and walking among seven lampstands is reminiscent of the priest's work in the Holy Place where the seven-branched lampstand existed. This clearly introduces the Seven Churches because it is Jesus who addresses each church (Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14).
- Second, chapters 4-5 picture God's throne and millions of angels and Jesus as the Lamb who has a sealed scroll in his hands. This introduces the Seven Seals because as He opens each seal, specific events are seen (5:1-7; 6:1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12; 8:1).
- Third, Revelation 8:2-6 is a scene in the Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary because of the reference to the altar of incense. It introduces the Seven Trumpets because the seven angels in that scene are the same ones who sound the trumpets (8:6, 7, 8, 10, 12; 9:1, 13; 11:15).
- Fourth, Revelation 11:19 is a picture of the Most Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary because it shows the Ark of the Covenant. That ark contained the Ten Commandments, which are apparently referred to twice in this major section as the commandments of God (12:17; 14:12).
- Fifth, Revelation 15:5-8 depicts the heavenly sanctuary and shows seven angels having seven plagues. This introduces the Seven Last Plagues because each angel pours out a plague (16:2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 12, 17).
- Sixth, Revelation 19:1-10 pictures the heavenly sanctuary because reference is again made to the twenty-four elders and four living creatures, who were in the sanctuary scene in chapters 4-5. This scene introduced the account of the Second Coming of Jesus and following events because the sanctuary scene informs us that the marriage supper of the Lamb was ready, and this metaphor is linked in Matthew 22:1-14 to the return of Jesus in glory.
- Finally, the seventh major section of Revelation is introduced by a sanctuary scene (God's throne is there, 21:5) that mentions the New Jerusalem and then proceeds to describe the New Jerusalem in some detail (21:9-22:5).

The sections of the Seven Seals, Seven Trumpets, and the Great Controversy (12:1-15:4) each contains a series of events or scenes which culminates in the Second Coming of Jesus and subsequent events: (1) the Second Coming of Jesus in the sixth seal (6:15-17); (2) the

establishment of Jesus' literal kingdom in the seventh trumpet (11:15); and (3) the Second Coming of Jesus in the sixth scene of the Great Controversy section (14:14-20). Therefore, it is more than reasonable to conclude that much of Revelation consists of prophecies that begin in John's day and extend to the Second Coming of Jesus and beyond. Thus, the major portion of Revelation concerns all of Christian history and not only the end-time.

Contextual Objections

Preterism

Regarding the application of the little horn in the prophecies of Daniel 7 and 8 to Antiochus IV, to do this requires that the four world kingdoms in Daniel 2 and 7 be reckoned as Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece, so that Antiochus IV can emerge from the divided Greek empire. However, Daniel itself describes the dual kingdom of Medo-Persia (Daniel 8:20), and secular history also records that it was this same dual kingdom that defeated Babylon in 539 B.C. Therefore, the four world kingdoms in Daniel 2 and 7 are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

Furthermore, the little horn in Daniel 7 emerges from the division of the fourth kingdom (Rome), and Antiochus IV emerged from the divided kingdom of Greece well after the death of Alexander the Great, whose death led to the immediate division of Greece. Rome's ascendancy came after Antiochus IV's lifetime, making him ineligible as the little horn in that chapter. Also, Daniel 7:26-27 indicates that the judgment in that chapter results in removing the little horn from power and in the establishment of Christ's literal kingdom of glory (cf. vv. 13-14). This did not happen after Antiochus IV's death. Moreover, Antiochus IV does not meet two of the other three specifications in the prophecy as given in Daniel 7:25 as outlined below:

- A He shall speak pompous words against the Most High,
- B Shall persecute the saints of the Most High,
- A¹ And shall intend to change times and law.
- B¹ Then the saints will be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.

As lines B and B¹ are obviously parallel to each other, so must A and A¹ be considered as parallel to each other, for this verse is in a section of poetry. This means that the *times and law* that the little horn intends to change belong to God and the *pompous words against the Most High* refer to the little horn's claim that he has the authority to change God's times and law. Note that he *shall intend* indicates that he thinks he can do this but does not actually have the authority to do it. This claim is the sin of blasphemy, the claim of possessing divine prerogatives (Matthew 26:63-65; Mark 14:61-64; John 10:29-33). First, Antiochus IV claimed a title referring to God but did not claim that he had the authority to change one of the laws of Israel's God. Second, none of his

activities in the second century B.C. can be dated to a period of 3 ½ years. He did persecute God's people, but that is the only specification of the prophecy that he met.

Both Preterism and Futurism

Both preterism and futurism applies the prophecy of the little horn in Daniel 8 to Antiochus IV. But he fails to meet six of the specifications for the little horn there, which not only means he did not fulfill that prophecy but that he is also a very poor type of the Antichrist, as outlined below:

- First, the comparative greatness of the little horn with respect to the Persian ram and the Greek goat does not describe Antiochus IV, who was infinitely less great or powerful than either of those empires. [Compare vv. 4, 8, 9 to see that the little horn was at least as great as the ram and the male goat of that prophecy.]
- Second, he did not match the military activities of the little horn in Daniel 8, which states that he *grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land* (v. 9). It was Antiochus III who moved south and successfully took Palestine from the Ptolemies (based in Egypt) in 198 B.C. Antiochus IV had some success in going after Egypt in the south during his campaign from 170-168 B.C., but Roman diplomacy turned him back in 168. Again, it was Antiochus III who extended Seleucid rule further east, all the way to the border of India during his military campaigns from 210-206 B.C. Most of these areas later rebelled, and when Antiochus IV attempted to reestablish Seleucid domination, he died having been unable to defeat the Parthians. Antiochus IV did not grow *exceedingly great...toward the Glorious Land* (v. 9) in the sense of conquering it because his predecessor had already accomplished that. In fact, under Antiochus IV, the Jews successfully harassed his forces (I Maccabees 3:57; 4:29) and eventually took back the Jerusalem Temple (I Maccabees 5:52). Thus, Antiochus IV ruled only one portion of the post-Alexander Greek empire for about eleven years and with only minor success.
- Third, Antiochus IV's activities in Jerusalem do not line up well with the description of the little horn when you examine them more closely. It is true that he did take over the city and desecrated the Temple there. However, he did not actually attack the literal foundation even if one interpreted this prophecy as pertaining to the Jerusalem Temple (Daniel 8:11). Nor did he specifically *cast truth down* (v. 12).
- Fourth, the rise of Antiochus IV to power does not match the description of the time period that the little horn is said to have arisen, *in the latter time* of the divided Greek kingdom (v. 23). Instead, Antiochus IV rose to power closer to the middle of that era, for the Seleucid dynasty officially began in 311 B.C. and lasted until 65 B.C., consisting of more than twenty different rulers. Antiochus IV was the eighth in the line, placing him in the

first half of the dynasty. Measured by the dates of his rule (175-164/3 B.C.), he would be more accurately in the middle of the dynasty, within less than twenty years from the exact middle.

- Fifth, the activities of Antiochus IV in and around Jerusalem does not match the period of either 2,300 or 1,150 days (v. 14). If one takes the number of days as applying to his general persecution of the Jews from 171-165 B.C., there is no evidence that places this persecution for a period of exactly 2,300 days. As for 1,150 days as applied to the time of the Seleucid actual control of the Jerusalem Temple per se, I Maccabees 1:54, 59 and 4:52, 54, describes this period as lasting for three years—or three years and ten days if you count the first ten days of setting up the pagan idol in the Temple before the actual pagan sacrifices began.
- Finally, a sixth objection to Antiochus IV being the little horn was there was nothing unusual about his death. Daniel 8:25 states that the end of the little horn would come *without human means* (literally, *hand*). Lamentations 4:6 and II Corinthians 5:1 indicate that events or objects made without human hand are those things which God Himself does without human assistance. Also, with the establishment of God's Kingdom in Daniel 2:34, 44-45, such events tend to be rather spectacular in nature. Historically, I Maccabees 6:8-17 seems to assign the death of Antiochus IV to natural causes in early 163 B.C.

Both preterist and futurist scholars insist that the context in both Daniel 7 and 8 is that the judgment in chapter 7 must be a judgment against the little horn specifically and that whatever is meant by the cleansing or restoration of the sanctuary in Daniel 8 must also be the result of what the little horn did to the sanctuary. On that basis, they conclude that the alleged Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment does not fit the criteria because it is allegedly a judgment of God's professed people instead of the little horn.

Our Response

Preterists and futurists are correct when they say that the context requires that the judgment in Daniel 7 and the cleansing or restoration of the sanctuary in Daniel 8 must be in response to the activities of the little horn. However, they are incorrect when they say that the Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment does not do this. As already stated, in Daniel 7 the little horn claims to have the authority to officially speak for God on earth, even to the changing of His times and law. When the Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment has been concluded, he will have been shown to be wrong about that claim, as only those who keep God's Law will be saved. Besides, our interpretation of the little horn as the Papacy means that it is part of the professed people of God.

As for Daniel 8, the little horn there attacks the truth of Christ's high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary and attempts to obscure it in the eyes of other Christians. The Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment will reveal the significance and importance of Christ's high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary as the correct and just way of dealing with the sin problem. Therefore, in both chapters in Daniel, the Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment does indeed address the problem posed by the little horn.

As we have already established, there is no automatic reason that the time elements in these prophecies cannot be understood as symbolically representing longer periods of time than their literal expressions. In fact, internal evidence demands such an interpretation. First, the 3 ½ times of Daniel 7:25 is equal to the 1,260 days of Revelation 12 [cf. Revelation 12:6 and 12:14 and the 42 months of Revelation 13:4] on the basis that each time consists of 360-day years and each month consists of only 30 days. But the Jewish calendar alternated between months of 29 and 30 days and they added a 13th month every three years or so in order to keep the festivals within the same seasons each year. Thus, two of these time elements (the 3 ½ times and 42 months) are based on non-literal times. Moreover, the 3 ½ times and 42 months are very unusual ways to refer to literal time; they are all given in a symbolic context; and they all apply to the middle of the Christian Era [Revelation 12:6, 13-16 lies between the early Christian Era around the First Coming of Jesus (v. 5) and the end-time era (v. 17's use of the Greek word for *remnant*, as in the *last* portion of a bolt of cloth)]. And the only way in which a day is used symbolically to represent a longer specific period of time is for a literal year (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6). Therefore, the year-day principle is valid and must be applied to those prophecies.

Revelation 11:1-2

In "The Remnant Church" we outlined this passage in Revelation about the measuring of the temple, altar, and worshipers as teaching the Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment. Briefly here we will look at the objections to our use of this passage.

Preterist and Eclectic Paradigms

Preterist and eclectic interpreters generally understand the temple to be the Christian Church, as taught by such New Testament passages as I Corinthians 3:16-17, Ephesians 2:19-22, and I Peter 2:5-6. The actual measuring is understood to signify God's ownership and protection of His Church, with the identification of this measuring with the sealing of God's people mentioned in Revelation 7. Therefore, they assert that it cannot refer to a pre-advent investigative judgment.

However, the book of Revelation nowhere else uses the temple to represent the Church, so it is unlikely to do so here either. That it does not do so here is shown by the fact that God's people are mentioned separately as those who worship there (Revelation 11:1). An attempt by one eclectic

writer to distinguish between the temple-church as the institution of the Church and the worshipers as the worshipping community is weak because the Church is a worshipping community and the New Testament never distinguishes between the Church as an institution and as God's people.

Futurist Objection

Dispensational futurist interpreters believe the reference to the temple is to an alleged rebuilt Jerusalem Temple in the end-time and that God's measuring of it signifies His ownership of it. For that reason, this passage says nothing about a pre-advent investigative judgment. However, even if a temple were rebuilt in Jerusalem (or any other place for that matter) it would not be considered as *the temple of God* (11:1) because after the death of Jesus, the Jerusalem Temple ceased to have any significance since Jesus as the Lamb of God was the ultimate sacrifice to which the animal sacrifices had pointed (John 1:29, 36; cf. Matthew 27:50-51; Mark 15:37-38; and Luke 23:45-46). Therefore, even before the time of Revelation (mid-90s), the Jerusalem Temple could not be called *the temple of God*. Therefore, the temple of God here is the heavenly sanctuary, which Revelation speaks of often (chapters 4-5; 8:2-6; 11:19; 15:1-2, 5-8) and which the book of Hebrews teaches is the only sanctuary that truly belongs to God (Hebrews 8:2; 9:11, 24).

Preterist, eclectic, and futurist scholars are all correct when they view the measuring of things and people of God as suggesting God's ownership and protection of them. However, that conclusion is not exclusive of the idea that a process of judgment is what certifies people (worshipers) as belonging to God and sealing them for protection from judgments or of highlighting the significance of the heavenly temple. Plainly, the Bible teaches that the most fundamental meaning of measuring *people* is that it is a process of judgment that evaluates or judges them (II Samuel 8:2; Matthew 7:1-2; Luke 6:37-38; II Corinthians 10:12).

Revelation 14:6

In "The Remnant Church" we showed that the judgment hour referred to in this verse is the Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment. The contextual objection of nearly all preterist, eclectic, and futurist scholars is that this could not refer to a pre-advent investigative judgment because it instead is speaking, in the context, of the fact that God's judgments are about to be poured out on those who reject the gospel in the Second Coming (Revelation 14:14-20).

However, we cannot accept this understanding for at least two reasons. First, the Greek word for *judgment* here indicates a process of judgment rather than the execution of the sentence of a judgment. Although the two Greek words for *judgment* can be used interchangeably, the primary meaning of this particular word for *judgment* does not immediately point to an executive judgment as in wrath. Second, in the book of Revelation, when a particular *hour* is said to arrive, the events

associated with it have come as well (3:3, 10; 9:15; 11:13; 14:15, where the same Greek word is rendered *time*; 17:12; 18:10, 17, 19). It is not used in an anticipatory sense.

Some have noted that it is always an hour of judgment when the gospel is proclaimed, for people who hear the gospel must make a decision to either accept or reject it. However true that is, it is not the intended meaning here. First, it is called *the hour of His [God's] judgment* and not the hour of *people's* judgment. Second, the judgment hour does not come because the everlasting gospel is being preached but rather that the everlasting gospel is proclaimed with new emphasis *for [because] the hour of His judgment has come.*

Since this judgment takes place while the gospel is being proclaimed and people can still be saved, it must be a process of judgment. A process of judgment implicitly means that it is investigative in nature. Therefore, the judgment in Revelation 14:6 is by definition a Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment.

Theological Objections

Preterist and futurist scholars essentially offer the same theological objections to the teaching of the Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment. Essentially, they are two in nature.

First, they allege that the Bible teaches that God's people do not go through any judgment but are judged at the moment they are justified by faith in Jesus. John 5:24 is used to support this position: *he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment.*

Our Response

In John 5:24 the Greek word there can mean *judgment* or *condemnation*. In this context, it means condemnation (a condemnation resulting from judgment), which is the translation in verse 29 of the same Greek word. Romans 14:10-12 and II Corinthians 5:10 both explicitly state that everyone will come *before the judgment seat of Christ*. A *judgment seat* referred to a specific courtroom location where the judge sat. There is no escaping the conclusion that while God's people do not come into condemnation, everyone—both righteous and wicked—will go through a judgment proceeding.

We agree, of course, that our sins are completely forgiven when we confess them and receive justification. The Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment does not imply that they are still hanging over our heads until that event, as is alleged by our critics. Instead, this judgment refutes the idea of “once saved, always saved” because if at the end of our life we decide to step outside of Christ, then we will have to pay for our sins. Therefore, a record is kept of them for that purpose.

We also agree that the Lord does not need to investigate anyone's life to determine whether to save them or not. He is God and knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). Besides, *the Lord knows those who are His* (II Timothy 2:19) and does not need to investigate the lives of anyone (whether His people or not). However, it is our position that neither of the investigative judgments mentioned in Scripture are for God but for others (Daniel 7:9-10, 26 and Revelation 20:11-13). Daniel 7:10 speaks of *a thousand thousands* and *ten thousand times ten thousand* attending the judgment scene there; on the basis of Revelation 5:11, these must be the angels in heaven. And in Revelation 20, this judgment is apparently for the benefit of the lost, for Scripture teaches that ultimately every knee will bow and confess that God is just (Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:10-11). In other words, while God does not even need to do this for others, as Love Personified (I John 4:8, 16), God does more than He needs to do. In this way, every possible question about why someone was saved or lost will be answered and agreed to so that sin will never rise again anywhere in the universe (Nahum 1:9).

A second theological objection to this doctrine is that the New Testament teaches that Jesus began His anti-typical Day of Atonement ministry in the heavenly sanctuary upon His ascension back to heaven in the first century A.D. Hebrews 6:19; 9:7-8, and 11-12 allegedly teach this. Furthermore, some scholars also teach that nowhere in the book of Revelation does the Most Holy Place appear in an end-time setting.

Our Response

In Hebrews 6:19 the phrase *behind the veil* is interpreted as describing the veil between the Holy and Most Holy Place in the sanctuary. Therefore, Jesus entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary when He ascended to heaven. However, in Hebrews 9:3-4, that veil is called the *second veil*. In chapter 6, the writer is not discussing the details of the sanctuary. Instead, he was emphasizing that it was *behind* the veil that Christ entered, that is, he used it figuratively to say that He had entered the Presence of the Father without regard to a specific compartment. It is the equivalent of saying that Jesus is sitting at the right hand of God (Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 10:12; 12:2; I Peter 3:22), which is simply a reference to His position of authority with God. A fundamental principle of Bible interpretation is that a text cannot be said to answer a question that it is not addressing.

In Hebrews 9:7-8 and 11-12, the Greek word translated as *Holiest of All* (v. 8) and *Most Holy Place* (v. 12) is the same word used in 8:2, where the context requires the translation as referring to the entire sanctuary structure. In 9:8 reference is made to the *first tabernacle*. On the basis that *the first part of the tabernacle* in verse 6 refers to the Holy Place compartment, many suggest that verse 8 also refers to the first compartment, and therefore, the normal word for *sanctuary* here must refer to the Most Holy Place. However, the expression in 9:8 is *while the first tabernacle was still standing*. There was never a time when the Holy Place, as opposed to the entire sanctuary,

was standing by itself. Therefore, verse 8 is referring to the earthly tabernacle in contrast to the heavenly sanctuary. Therefore, Jesus is said to have entered the heavenly sanctuary now that the earthly sanctuary has no more meaning for God. Thus, the text does not teach that Jesus entered the Most Holy Place at His ascension. Again, 9:12, in the context of verse 11, shows the heavenly sanctuary is seen in contrast to the earthly tabernacle. Therefore, that text only says that Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary without specifying which compartment.

Regarding the allegation that the book of Revelation never speaks of the Most Holy Place in an end-time context, that is simply incorrect. Revelation 11:19 introduces the section of 11:19-15:4, a section that deals mostly with end-time events.

A Special Objection

Desmond Ford was essentially a preterist in his approach to the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, although like earlier preterists he did not deny the element of predictive prophecy. Since he alleges that the New Testament expected the Second Coming of Jesus to occur by or before the end of the first century, no Bible prophecy, including Daniel 8:14, extends beyond the first century A.D. Ford also added the apotelesmatic principle to his prophetic paradigm, in which prophecies are fulfilled in installments. As a result, the 1844 message may be one installment in which the significance of Christ's high priestly ministry is emphasized. However, its 2,300 days cannot possibly refer to the year 1844 or a Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment.

Our Response

First, preterism ignores the obvious language that is used in Daniel and Revelation that demonstrates most of their prophecies extend well beyond the day of the authors (Daniel 2:44; 7:13-14, 26-27; 8:17 with 11:40-12:2; Revelation 1:1, 19; 22:6).

Second, while there may be echoes or pre-cursors in some prophecies of the events that will be fulfilled at a much later time, a prophecy must require or at least allow for more than one fulfillment or for more than one installment of its fulfillment in order to so interpret them. For example, the prophecy concerning the rain of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:23, 28-32) allows for two installments of that prophecy, one for the former rain and one for the latter rain. That is the reason that the apostle Peter said that this prophecy was being fulfilled at the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 (vv. 16-21). However, that was not the ultimate fulfillment, for it did not meet all of the specifications of the prophecy in Joel, which includes *wonders in the heavens and in the earth* (Joel 2:30), specifically as the darkening of the sun, the moon turning to blood, and *the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord* (v. 31). Yet Ford would have us believe that the first installment in the prophecies of Daniel 7 and 8 was *the* fulfillment. That is not even consistent with his own explanation of the apotelesmatic principle.

There is no language in the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation requiring or even allowing for them to be fulfilled in installments. Furthermore, their prophecies contain so many specifications that it is impossible to find more than one fulfillment, whether that is viewed as a literal fulfillment or as an installment.

Final Conclusion

None of the numerous chronological, contextual, or theological objections to the teaching of the Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment is valid. In fact, the evidence within these prophecies themselves requires the conclusion that this is a Scriptural teaching, as we have shown elsewhere.

One additional evidence is that the Day of Atonement came each year in the Hebrew calendar near the end of the religious year in the fall (the tenth day of the seventh month, Leviticus 23:27). Almost all Christian expositors agree that the spring festivals are typical of events associated with the First Coming of Jesus, and that the fall festivals are typical of events associated with the Second Coming of Jesus. The Day of Atonement was clearly a Judgment Day in Israel that occurred before the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:34). The Feast of Tabernacles typified the final universal condition of all peoples worshiping God together (Zechariah 14:16-19), which according to the New Testament will occur after the Second Coming of Jesus. Therefore, the Day of Atonement represents a Pre-Advent Judgment of God's professed people (only Israelites went through that judgment).

The preterist and futurist paradigms for interpreting apocalyptic prophecies are united in their opposition to the interpretation that the Roman Church is the Antichrist. This is in direct opposition to the sixteenth century Protestant Reformers. Although not identical in every respect to modern preterism and futurism, these two paradigms were essentially developed by two Spanish Jesuit priests involved in the Catholic Counter-Reformation to take the heat off the Papacy.

Francisco Ribera (1537-1591) was essentially the founder of futurism, although it was not the dispensational futurism so prominent today. Dispensational futurism added the secret rapture of the Church to the early form of futurism in the nineteenth century. Ribera taught that the Antichrist would be a charismatic individual atheist, not a system that claimed to officially represent Christ on earth, who would arise at the end of the age, befriend the Jewish people and rebuild their temple, claim to be divine, and conquer the whole world in the space of 3 ½ years before the return of Jesus in glory. As a result, he interpreted everything from Revelation 7:1 onward as applying to those last 3 ½ years before the Second Advent.

By contrast Luis de Alcazar (1554-1613) developed the initial preterist paradigm. Alcazar declared that Emperor Nero was the Antichrist. He applied Revelation chapters 1-11 as the struggle against the Jewish people and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D 70. Then chapters 12-

19 were applied to the Church's struggle with persecution from the pagan Roman Empire and to the latter's eventual conversion to the Church. Revelation 20's millennium represented an indefinite but long period of time when the Roman Church reigned in a time of peace until the final persecution of Antichrist (Nero), when he was judged. Finally, the Church itself was viewed as the New Jerusalem, with Revelation 21-22 representing the endless reign of the Roman Church. Thus, chapters 1-19 were all fulfilled by the end of the sixth century.

Preterism first made inroads among Protestants beginning as early as the seventeenth century and then expanding in the eighteenth century especially among German rationalists, whose Enlightenment perspective on seeking natural explanations for things in contradistinction to supernatural explanations led to an increasing skepticism of predictive prophecy in general. Over time, Protestants lost their nearly universal belief in the historicist paradigm of viewing the prophecies, with its sweep of history, year-day principle, and identification of the Papacy as Antichrist, that in the nineteenth century most mainline Protestant churches had converted to some form of preterism.

Meanwhile, Protestantism remained firmly united against the futurist paradigm until the nineteenth century, when men like John Nelson Darby and others adopted it and placed the secret rapture of the Church with futurism. This dispensational futurism caught on more rapidly, assisted by the creation of the modern nation of Israel in 1948 and the reoccupation of Old Jerusalem by Israel as a result of the Arab-Israeli War in 1967. By or before the end of the twentieth century, futurism had engulfed the large majority of conservative evangelical Protestant Christianity.

Although the sixteenth Protestant Reformers did not teach the Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment, their historicist paradigm allowed for its eventual discovery and teaching in the middle of the nineteenth century. It remains only a teaching of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which grew out of the nineteenth-century Millerite movement that specialized in the prophecies of Daniel. Not coincidentally, it is the only church that today teaches the old Protestant view of historicism, the sweep of history in the apocalyptic prophecies, the year-day principle, and the Papacy as the Antichrist. One wonders where Protestants would be today if they had remained faithful to their founding principles.