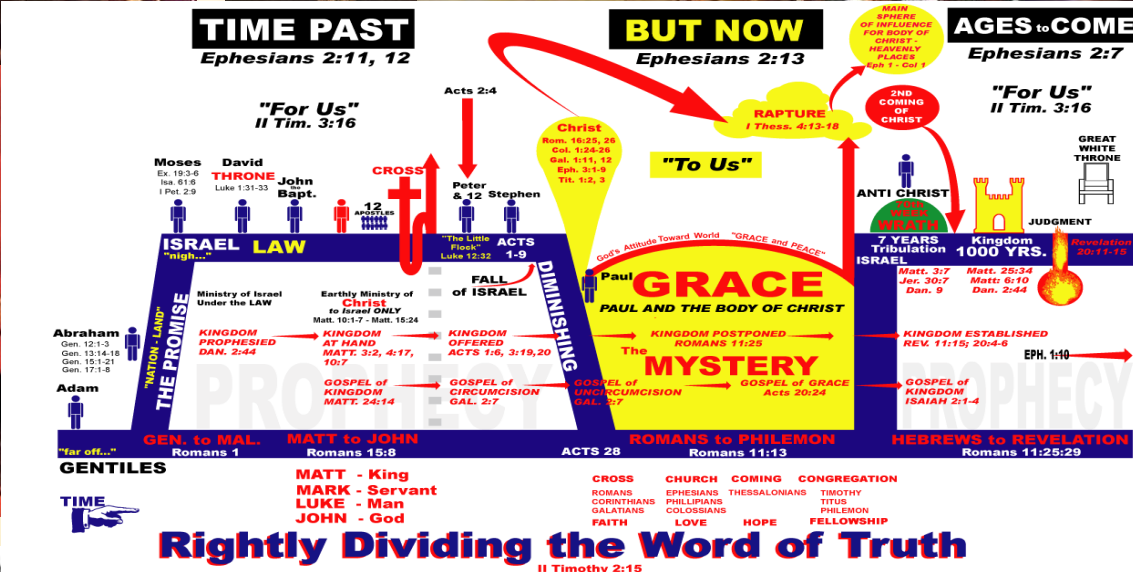


# A History of Grace Theology



# Session 3

## February 27, 2011

# Review of Key Points

- Dispensational Truth was revealed in the Old Testament
- The O.T. contains a prophetic timeline which describes end times events and the establishment of the earthly Jewish Millennial Kingdom, but does not include the Dispensation of Grace
- First century Jewish scholars expected that OT scenario to be literally fulfilled through the coming Messiah and his ministry

# Review of Key Points

- Jesus earthly ministry was completely consistent with the O.T. scenario.
- The early ministry of the 12 apostles was consistent with the Old Testament scenario.
- The conversion of Paul marked a dramatic shift in the focus of the preaching of the gospel with the gentile mission and was inconsistent and contradictory to much of the O.T. scenario.
- Pauline truth was revealed progressively.
- The distinctive Pauline truth was never fully recognized by the Church and Jewish sects continued until the fourth century



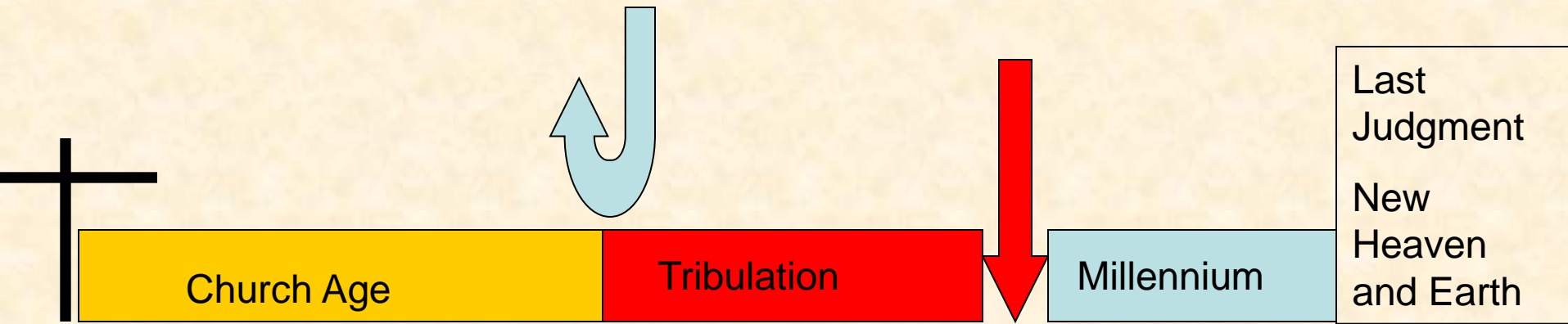
# Reasons for failure to recognize the Pauline Message

- Lack of widespread availability to all the New Testament Scriptures
- Growing fascination with the earthly ministry of Jesus
- Pre-occupation with Christological and Gnostic heresies.
- Confusion about the nature of the Tribulation and an imminent expectation of Christ's return

# Premillennialism



# Post-Tribulation Return



# Pre-Tribulation Rapture

# Pre-Millennialism in the Ante-Nicene Church Fathers

**Papias (a.d. 60-130) the bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia,**

"that there will be a millennium after the resurrection of the dead, when the kingdom of Christ will be set up in material form on this earth."

“there will be a millennium after the resurrection from the dead, when the personal reign of Christ will be established on this earth.”

# Pre-Millennialism in the Ante-Nicene Church Fathers

**Justin Martyr (a.d. 100-165)** in his *Dialogue With Trypho* (@ a.d. 140), a Jewish man, made the following pre-millennial statement:

But I and others, who are right-minded Christians on all points, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare.



# Pre-Millennialism in the Ante-Nicene Church Fathers

Irenaeus grew up in Asia Minor and was disciplined by Polycarp, who knew the Apostle John. Irenaeus had a very extensive view of Bible prophecy in his last five chapters of *Against Heresies*, which were suppressed throughout the Middle Ages by anti-pre-millennialists and rediscovered in 1571

# Pre-Millennialism in the Ante-Nicene Church Fathers

## **Ireneaus (c. 200 AD)**

But when this Anti-Christ shall have devastated all things in this world, he will reign for three years and six months, and sit in the temple at Jerusalem; and then the Lord will come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire; but bringing in for the righteous the times of the kingdom

# Pre-Millennialism in the Ante-Nicene Church Fathers

## **Tertullian (160 – 230 AD)**

But we do confess that a kingdom is promised to us upon the earth, although before heaven, only in another state of existence; inasmuch as it will be after the resurrection for a thousand years in the divinely-built city of Jerusalem, "let down from heaven," which the apostle also calls "our mother from above;" and, while declaring that our citizenship is in heaven, he predicts of it that it is really a city in heaven. This both Ezekiel had knowledge of and the Apostle John beheld.

# Pre-Millennialism in the Ante-Nicene Church Fathers

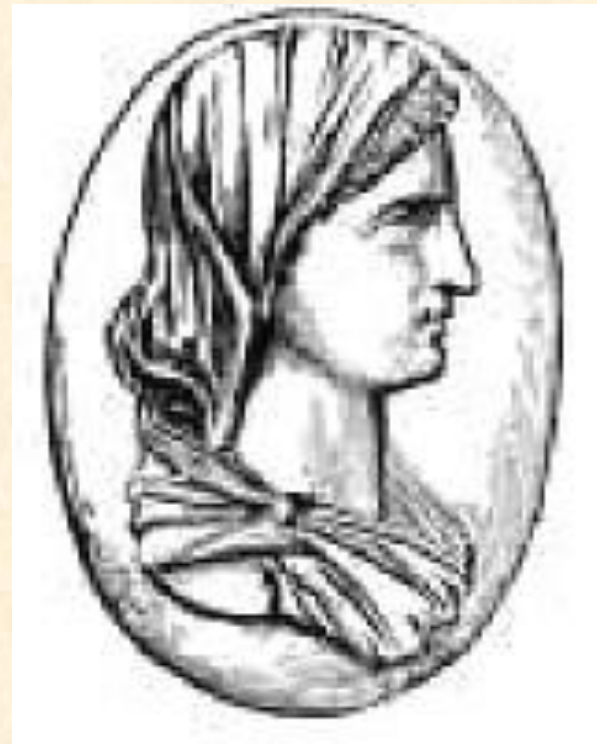
Philip Schaff, the dean of American church historians and himself a postmillennialist, provided the following summary of the early church's view of the millennium:

The most striking point in the eschatology of the ante-Nicene age is the prominent chiliasm, or millenarianism, that is the belief of a visible reign of Christ in glory on earth with the risen saints for a thousand years, before the general resurrection and judgment. It was indeed not the doctrine of the church embodied in any creed or form of devotion, but a widely current opinion of distinguished teachers, such as Barnabas, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Methodius, and Lactantius.

Pre-Tribulation Research Center (<http://www.pre-trib.org/articles/view/brief-history-of-early-premillennialism>)

# Marcion: Heretic or Last Pauline Dispensationalist?

- Marcion of Sinope:
- 85-160 - AD.
- From Northern Turkey
- First to propose a canon of the scriptures. (Canon was agreed upon by the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century)





# Marcion's Basic History

- Born around 85 AD and lived in Sinope, northern Asia Minor
- His father was a bishop in Sinope.
- He rose to a prominent position and was an assistant to his father.
- He had a disagreement with his father and was excommunicated from the church.
- He was accused of “seducing a virgin,” but most scholars believe it was a metaphorical reference to false doctrine.

# Marcion's Basic History

- He apparently became a wealthy ship owner.
- Around 135AD he went to Rome and was initially well accepted. He gave the church a very large gift, which was later returned when he was declared a heretic.
- He returned to Asia minor and founded a large community that lasted until the 5<sup>th</sup> century. He was known for his good character

# Marcion's Canon

- Marcion is best known for proposing a standard set of sacred writing to include as scripture.
- Supposedly his canon was the Pauline epistles (without the pastorals) and an edited version of Luke.

# Marcion's Teachings

- There are 2 Gods, the Old Testament Creator who is angry and vindictive and the author of evil and the New Testament Heavenly Father who is loving and full of grace.
- Jesus died to satisfy the wrath of the OT God.
- Marcion held Jesus Christ to be the son of the Heavenly Father. His body was a spirit, not physical.

# Marcion's Teachings

- Paul was the only apostle that understood this truth that the benevolent God was not the same as the Jewish god.
- He rejected all the Old Testament
- He edited Paul's writings to exclude Jewish references.



# Where Did These Ideas Come From?

- The remarkable thing about Marcion's teaching was that a person with such strange ideas could have ever had so much influence in the orthodox church.
- Ehrman states about Marcionism: "From a historical perspective, it is intriguing that any such religion could claim direct historical continuity with Jesus." (Lost Christianities, p.103).

# Church Fathers were known to misrepresent their opponents

The scandal in regard to him, reported by Tertullian in his *De Praescriptione*, 30, is quite in accord with Tertullian's usual conduct towards heretics, and may be set aside as not having the slightest foundation in fact, and as absolutely contradicting what we know of Apelles from this report of his contemporary, Rhodo. His moral character was certainly above reproach, and the same may be said of his master, Marcion.

<http://www.bible.ca/history/fathers/NPNF2-01/footnote/fn31.htm>

# What if the following assumptions were correct?

- Marcion's teachings were misrepresented.
- Marcion held to orthodox views of God and believed the OT and non-Pauline writings to be scripture but not for direct application for the Body of Christ
- Marcion recognized the unique ministry of Paul.

In Marcionite belief, Christ was not a Jewish Messiah, but a spiritual entity that was sent by the Monad to reveal the truth about existence, and thus allowing humanity to escape the earthly trap of the demiurge. (Marcionism, wikipedia; Sept. 16, 2010)

Could Marcion only recognize the difference between “flesh” and “spirit” as Paul did?

Marcion called (the NT) God, the Stranger God, or the Alien God, in some translations, as this deity had not had any previous interactions with the world, and was wholly unknown.  
(Marcionism, wikipedia; Sept. 16, 2010)

Ehrman states that for Marcion, “The New Testament is completely new and unanticipated.” (Lost Christianities, p.107)

Is this a misunderstanding of the “mystery?”



Paul, with his focus on free grace, was by far Marcion's favorite Apostle. As a result, he rejected the writings attributed to all the other Apostles and relied on forms of Luke's Gospel and ten Pauline epistles that he redacted.  
(<http://www.christianorigins.com/marcion.html>)

Did he see that Paul alone was the Apostle of the Gentiles?

In those heretical circles the reverence for St Paul was almost boundless.

([http://www.ccel.org/ccel/harnack/origin\\_nt.iii.ii.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/harnack/origin_nt.iii.ii.html))

Does this sound like the accusation that Grace believers “worship” Paul?

It was, moreover, Marcion himself that, according to Eshnik, taught that Christ had twice descended from Heaven; the first time to suffer and to die, the second time to call Paul and to *reveal first to him the significance of His death.*

Is this not exactly what happened (although Christ did not descend but appeared to Saul)?

The Prologues to the Pauline Epistles (which are not a part of the text, but short introductory sentences as one might find in modern study Bibles [\[3\]](#)), found in several older Latin [codices](#), are now widely believed to have been written by Marcion or one of his followers. Harnack notes [\[4\]](#): (Marcionism, wikipedia.org, September 17, 2010)