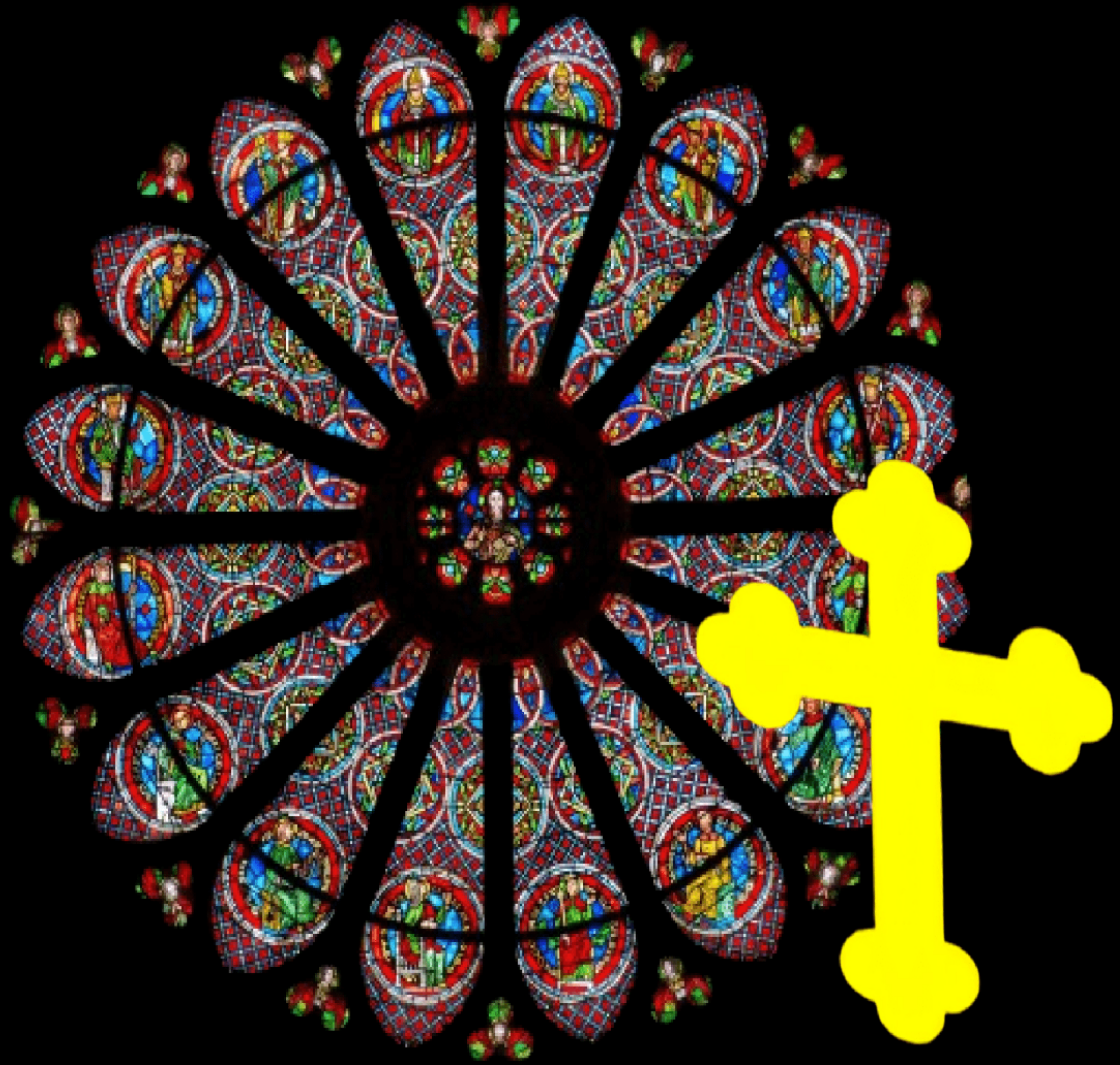


CHRISTIANITY



**Foundation,
Apocalypse, and Future**

Mark Mountjoy

Christianity

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Cover: **Christianity: Foundation, Apocalypse, and Future** explores the faith's prophetic origins, historical triumph, and eternal kingdom. Inspired by the late Hans Küng's book of the same title, this presentation celebrates Christianity's established victory through fulfilled prophecy and cosmic vindication.

The talk examines how the Hebrew Scriptures provided Christianity's blueprint, how the Church emerged as a revolutionary movement transcending all boundaries, and how God's promises to Israel found their ultimate fulfillment in Christ. Rather than waiting for future validation, Christians live in an already-established kingdom with proven authority and eternal permanence.

From Pentecost's explosive beginning to Christianity's global spread, the presentation reveals how this faith succeeded not through human wisdom but divine orchestration. The apocalyptic dimensions demonstrate historical vindication, while the ongoing mission flows from present victory rather than future hope.

The stained glass rose window represents the whole Christian world in all its varieties, each beautiful fractal drawing light from the central Gospel story that continues transforming civilization itself.

Book design by True Christian Press

Preamble

The story of the Christian Church is a tapestry far more intricate and profound than most realize. From its humble beginnings in a small upper room in Jerusalem to the countless gatherings that now span the globe, this movement represents a remarkable journey of transformation and endurance. Yet beneath the visible growth lies a deeper narrative—one that reaches far beyond the day of Pentecost and deep into the ancient prophecies of the Jewish Tanakh.

These prophecies, penned centuries before Jesus of Nazareth walked the earth, paint a fascinating picture of a movement born within Judaism that would ultimately become a great mountain filling the whole earth. It is a journey that weaves through the intricate prophecies of Moses, the vivid visions of Daniel, the servant songs of Isaiah, and the promises of a new covenant by Jeremiah.

This is more than a historical exploration. It is a profound narrative that challenges our understanding of the relationship between ancient Israel and the modern Church, between prophecy and fulfillment, between the old covenant and the new. As we examine these connections, we'll uncover how the Church's identity and purpose were intricately woven into the

very fabric of Jewish scripture, waiting to be unveiled at the appointed time.

What Kind of Faith is Christianity?

Most Christians live as though their faith is unfinished—as though the central promises of the New Testament remain outstanding, suspended in an indefinite future. They worship a Christ who saved them from sin but who has not yet kept His most emphatic prophetic commitments. They read Revelation as a book about events that haven't happened. They sing about a kingdom that hasn't fully arrived. They wait for a return that was promised within a generation but has now been delayed for two thousand years.

This study proposes a different understanding: that Christianity is a religion of accomplished victory, not anxious expectation. That every apocalyptic promise Jesus made was fulfilled precisely when and how He said it would be. That the New Testament's urgent language of imminence was not mistaken, exaggerated, or metaphorical—it was accurate. And that recognizing this transforms how we understand the faith, the Church, and our place in redemptive history.

The implications are enormous. If Jesus promised to return within His generation and did not, Christianity has a credibility problem at its foundation. But if He promised to return within His generation and *did*—in judgment upon Jerusalem and the Second Jewish Commonwealth between 66 and 136 CE—then

Christianity is the most validated religion in human history. Every promise kept. Every timeline honored. Every prophetic word vindicated by the historical record.

The Tanakh: Christianity's Prophetic Blueprint

Christianity did not emerge from a vacuum. It grew directly from the soil of the Hebrew scriptures—the Tanakh—which provided the prophetic architecture that Jesus claimed to fulfill. Understanding this foundation is essential because the New Testament authors assumed their readers knew it. They wrote for audiences steeped in Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets.

Consider the scope of what the Tanakh predicted and Christianity claims was accomplished. Isaiah's Servant Songs (chapters 42, 49, 50, 52–53) describe a figure who would suffer vicariously for others, be 'despised and rejected,' bear the iniquities of many, and through his suffering bring healing. Psalm 22 depicts a righteous sufferer whose hands and feet are pierced, whose garments are divided by lot, who cries 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'—language Jesus quoted from the cross. Daniel 9:24–27 provides a mathematical timeline of 483 years from a specific Persian decree to 'Messiah the Prince,' after which the Anointed One would be 'cut off' and the city and sanctuary destroyed. These are not vague prognostications. They are *architecturally precise predictions* that either match the historical Jesus or they do not.

The evidence strongly suggests they match. The suffering described in Isaiah 53 corresponds to the crucifixion accounts in all four Gospels. The 483-year countdown from Artaxerxes' decree in 458 BCE arrives at 26 CE—the year of Jesus' baptism and public presentation by John. The destruction of 'the city and the sanctuary' after Messiah's death corresponds precisely to Jerusalem's destruction in 70 CE.

This is what makes Christianity unique among world religions. Its central figure did not merely claim divine authority—He claimed to fulfill a pre-existing prophetic framework written centuries before His birth, and the historical record confirms the fulfillment point by point. The Tanakh functions as a divine blueprint: the architectural drawings were filed centuries in advance, and the building matches the plans.

What the New Testament Actually Promised

The New Testament makes claims that most modern Christians have been taught to push into the indefinite future. But the original Greek text is unambiguous about timing. The apostles used words like *eggus* (near), *en tachei* (shortly, with speed), *mello* (about to), and *eggus aphanismou* (near vanishing) to describe events they expected within their lifetimes. These are not words that tolerate a 2,000-year delay.

The Promises in Their Own Words

Jesus Himself set the timeline: ‘Truly I say to you, *this generation* will not pass away until all these things take place’ (Matthew 24:34). The Greek *genea hautē* (‘this generation’) is specific and immediate—it refers to the people standing in front of Him, not to some future race or era. Every other use of ‘this generation’ in the Gospels refers to Jesus’ contemporaries without exception (Matthew 11:16; 12:41–42; 23:36; Mark 8:12; Luke 7:31; 11:29–32, 50–51; 17:25).

The apostles echoed this urgency without qualification. Peter declared that ‘the end of all things is at hand’ (1 Peter 4:7). The writer of Hebrews said ‘in a very, very little while, He who is coming will come and will not delay’ (Hebrews 10:37). Paul told the Corinthians that ‘the time has been shortened’ and ‘the fashion of this world is passing away’ (1 Corinthians 7:29, 31)—present tense, actively happening in their lifetime. James told his readers ‘the coming of the Lord is at hand’ and ‘the Judge is standing at the door’ (James 5:8–9). John wrote that ‘it is the last hour’ (1 John 2:18). And the Book of Revelation opens and closes with the same declaration: ‘things which must shortly come to pass’ (Revelation 1:1; 22:6).

Either every one of these writers was wrong, or the events they described actually occurred within their generation. There is no honest middle ground that preserves both the integrity of the text and a 2,000-year delay.

What Actually Ended:

The Dissolution of the Second Commonwealth

If the New Testament's promises of imminent fulfillment were accurate, then something enormous must have happened in the first and second centuries to constitute that fulfillment. And something enormous did happen. Between 66 and 136 CE, the entire world of Second Temple Judaism was systematically dismantled—not by abstract theological development, but by catastrophic historical events that match the prophetic descriptions point by point.

The Complete List of What Permanently Ended

The Aaronic high priesthood ceased to exist. The unbroken succession of high priests stretching back to Aaron was permanently terminated. The last functioning high priest, Phannias ben Samuel, was a grotesque Zealot appointee chosen by lot during the civil war. After 70 CE, no legitimate high priest ever served again.

The Levitical priesthood and its services ended completely. Thousands of Levites who had maintained the daily liturgical cycle for five centuries suddenly had no Temple, no altar, no function. The entire priestly infrastructure that governed Jewish religious life simply vanished.

The daily sacrifice (Tamid) ceased on 17 Tammuz, 70 CE. According to Josephus, on that specific date the perpetual offering that had burned continuously since the Temple's construction was extinguished forever—for lack of priests or lambs, or both. This was not a temporary interruption. The fire has never been relit.

The Holy of Holies—the most sacred space in Judaism, entered only once yearly by the high priest on Yom Kippur—was first violated by Pompey in 63 BCE, profaned by Zealot occupation in 67 CE, and destroyed by fire in 70 CE. The divine Presence (Shekinah) that Israel believed dwelt between the cherubim was understood to have departed.

The Sanhedrin, Judaism's supreme judicial and legislative body, lost its authority with the Temple's destruction and was permanently dissolved as a governing institution.

The covenant festivals—Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, Yom Kippur, and the others—could no longer be observed as Moses commanded, because their observance required a functioning Temple, a legitimate priesthood, and animal sacrifices. What survives today are commemorative adaptations, not the Mosaic ordinances themselves.

The genealogical records that proved tribal descent were destroyed in the Temple fire. Without these records, no one could establish legitimate Levitical or Aaronic lineage, making the priesthood permanently irrecoverable.

Jewish political sovereignty was eliminated first in 70 CE and completely extinguished after Bar Kokhba's defeat in 136 CE. Emperor Hadrian renamed the province Syria Palaestina, rebuilt Jerusalem as a pagan city (Aelia Capitolina), erected a temple to Jupiter on the Temple Mount, and banned Jews from entering the city under penalty of death.

This was not gradual decline. It was comprehensive annihilation of an entire religious and political civilization—the world the apostles inhabited, the system the New Testament said was ‘near vanishing’ (Hebrews 8:13), the ‘fashion of this world’ that Paul said was ‘passing away’ (1 Corinthians 7:31). Every element the apostles identified as temporary, obsolete, and approaching its end was in fact permanently destroyed within their generation.

The Trust Account:

Understanding Salvation as Present Reality

Consider a practical analogy. Imagine a wealthy grandfather who establishes a trust fund for his grandchildren. He files the legal paperwork, deposits the assets, names the beneficiaries, and specifies the terms of distribution. From the moment the trust is established, the grandchildren are legally wealthy—even if they don't yet hold the money in their hands. The inheritance is real, legally binding, and guaranteed. It simply hasn't been distributed yet.

Now imagine the distribution date arrives. The trustee releases the funds. The grandchildren can now access their inheritance directly. The trust didn't become 'more real' on distribution day—it was always real. But the beneficiaries' experience of it changed fundamentally. They moved from legal heirs to active possessors.

This is precisely the New Testament's framework for salvation. Christ's death and resurrection established the 'trust'—the new covenant with all its provisions: forgiveness, adoption, the indwelling Spirit, eternal life. These were legally secured at the cross. But the *full distribution*—the removal of the old covenant system that stood as a competing claim, the consummation of the marriage between Christ and His Church, the establishment of the eternal kingdom without rival—required the dissolution of the old order. That dissolution occurred between 66 and 136 CE.

Christians today are not waiting for the trust to be established. They are not waiting for the inheritance to become real. They are living in the fully distributed reality of the new covenant, with unrestricted access to every spiritual blessing Christ secured. The old system has been permanently removed. The new has fully come.

The Ekklēsia: What the Church Actually Is

The Greek word *ekklēsia* (ecclesia) did not originate as a religious term. In the Greek-speaking world, it referred to a civic assembly—citizens summoned by herald to deliberate on matters of common concern. When the New Testament adopted this word for the community of Christ-followers, it carried that civic resonance: these were people called out of the general population for a specific public purpose.

Jesus used this word only twice in the Gospels (Matthew 16:18; 18:17), but He used it with extraordinary weight. ‘I will build my *ekklēsia*, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.’ This was not a promise about constructing a building or establishing an institution. It was a declaration of war against death itself—and a guarantee of victory.

The early Church understood itself as this new assembly—the covenant community that had inherited the promises formerly administered through the Temple system. When the writer of Hebrews says his readers have come ‘to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to myriads of angels in festal gathering, to the assembly (*ekklēsia*) of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven’ (Hebrews 12:22–23), he is describing a present spiritual reality, not a future hope. These believers had already arrived. The kingdom was already theirs.

The Church's Perpetual Mission

If the apocalyptic promises have been fulfilled, the Church's mission does not end—it clarifies. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20) was not a temporary assignment pending Christ's return; it is the permanent vocation of the people of God in the established kingdom. The Church exists to make disciples, to embody the reconciled humanity that Christ died to create, and to demonstrate—by the quality of its common life—that the kingdom of God is not a future dream but a present reality.

This means the Church's core practices are not holding patterns. Baptism is not a placeholder until something better comes along. The Lord's Supper is not a temporary memorial that will be superseded by a future messianic banquet—it is the messianic banquet, shared perpetually in the kingdom that has already arrived. Worship is not rehearsal for heaven; it is participation in the heavenly reality that Hebrews 12 says believers have already entered.

Paul told the Corinthians: 'As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death *until He comes*' (1 Corinthians 11:26). If Christ came in judgment upon Jerusalem within that generation—as He repeatedly promised—then the Lord's Supper was not meant to expire. It was meant to be perpetual: a celebration in the realized kingdom, not a vigil in an unrealized one. The meal continues not because Christ hasn't come, but because He has.

The Credibility Question

Every honest engagement with Christianity must confront the timing problem. Jesus said ‘this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.’ The apostles said the end was near, at hand, about to happen. Either these statements were true or they were not.

Futurism—the dominant eschatological framework in Western Christianity—resolves this tension by arguing that Jesus was speaking about a future generation, or that ‘near’ means something different in God’s time, or that the prophetic clock was paused after the 69th week of Daniel and will resume at some future date. These explanations require the reader to believe that the New Testament’s most emphatic time indicators meant the opposite of what they say. They require ‘soon’ to mean ‘not soon,’ ‘at hand’ to mean ‘not at hand,’ and ‘this generation’ to mean ‘some other generation.’

Full Preterism resolves the tension by placing all fulfillment in 70 CE, but this creates its own problems—it collapses the ‘Little Season’ of Revelation 20 and ignores the Bar Kokhba revolt (132–136 CE), which fulfilled the Gog and Magog prophecy and completed Daniel’s 70th week.

Atavist eschatology resolves the tension by taking the text at face value: the New Testament’s time indicators were accurate, the fulfillment occurred within the apostolic generation and its

immediate aftermath (66–136 CE), and the prophetic framework of Daniel's 70 weeks was completed through two separate 42-month periods separated by a divinely ordained interval of mercy. This reading honors the Greek text, matches the historical record, and preserves Jesus' credibility without requiring any redefinition of plain language.

The stakes are high. If Christianity cannot account for its own most basic prophetic claims—made by its founder and repeated by every New Testament author—then skeptics have a legitimate grievance. But if those claims were fulfilled exactly as stated, Christianity possesses the most powerful evidence base of any religion in history: a prophet who told you what would happen, when it would happen, and to whom it would happen—and history confirmed every detail.

The Future: Life in the Realized Kingdom

If the apocalyptic promises have been fulfilled, what remains? Everything that matters.

The Christian life is not a waiting room. The kingdom of God is not approaching—it has arrived. Christ reigns. The Holy Spirit indwells every believer. The new covenant is in full effect. Death has been conquered—not theoretically, but actually, through Christ's resurrection and the permanent removal of the old covenant system that administered condemnation (2 Corinthians 3:7–9). Christians who die in faith enter

immediately into the presence of God (2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23), not into a holding pattern awaiting a future resolution.

This understanding liberates Christians from the anxious eschatological speculation that has distorted the faith for centuries. No more ‘rapture ready’ theology that treats the world as disposable. No more newspaper exegesis that scans every headline for signs of the end. No more date-setting that embarrasses the Church and vindicates skeptics. Instead, Christians are free to invest fully in the world God made and the communities God called them to build—because the kingdom is here, and our work within it matters eternally.

The practical implications touch every dimension of Christian life. Evangelism is not recruitment for a lifeboat before the ship sinks—it is an invitation into the abundant life of the realized kingdom. Ethics are not temporary rules for a world about to be destroyed—they are the permanent character of kingdom citizens. Justice work is not polishing brass on a sinking ship—it is participating in the reign of Christ over all creation. Marriage, parenting, scholarship, art, commerce, and governance all take on greater significance when understood as kingdom activities rather than distractions from an imminent apocalypse.

Christianity is not waiting for its story to end. Its story reached its climactic fulfillment in the first and second centuries, exactly as promised. What remains is the ongoing, eternal, ever-expanding reality of life in the kingdom of God—the city

whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 11:10), the inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading (1 Peter 1:4), the kingdom that cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12:28).

Conclusion:

The Faith Once Delivered

The author of Jude urged his readers to ‘contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints’ (Jude 3). That phrase—‘once for all delivered’—implies a faith that is complete, not still under construction. A faith delivered, not still arriving.

This study has argued that Christianity is precisely that: a completed revelation, a fulfilled promise, a victorious faith. The Tanakh provided the prophetic blueprint. Jesus fulfilled it in His life, death, and resurrection. The apostles proclaimed its imminent consummation. And history confirmed their proclamation through the systematic dissolution of the Second Jewish Commonwealth between 66 and 136 CE.

None of this diminishes the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit, the continuing growth of the Church, or the eternal significance of each believer’s walk with Christ. The kingdom’s arrival did not end the story—it launched the permanent chapter. We are not living in the last days; we are living in the eternal age that the last days inaugurated.

For those encountering these ideas for the first time, a word of pastoral reassurance: nothing here threatens your salvation, your relationship with Christ, or your standing before God. Understanding prophetic fulfillment more accurately does not require anyone to ‘start over’ as a Christian. Christ covers unintentional errors of understanding—the high priestly role of atonement for the people’s inadvertent mistakes (Hebrews 9:7) belongs to Jesus, and He exercises it with perfect grace.

The question before us is not whether we are saved—we are. The question is whether we will allow the evidence to reshape our understanding of what God has already accomplished, and whether we can extend grace to fellow believers who read the same scriptures and arrive at different conclusions about timing. Semantic agreement between Christians begins with the recognition that we worship the same risen Lord, trust the same finished work, and share the same eternal inheritance—however differently we may understand the prophetic calendar.

The faith was once for all delivered. The promises were kept. The victory was won. And the kingdom of God—established, unshakable, eternal—is *ours*.

Endnotes

1. The urgency of New Testament timing language has been extensively documented. For a comprehensive survey, see C.H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (London: Nisbet, 1935), who first articulated ‘realized eschatology’ as a serious interpretive framework. See also N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), chapters 8–10.
2. For the mathematical precision of Daniel’s 69 weeks, multiple chronologists independently confirm: 458 BCE (Artaxerxes’ decree to Ezra) + 483 years = 26 CE (Messiah presented). Oxford Bible Church provides detailed calculations showing this alignment with Jewish luni-solar calendar years.
3. Isaiah 52:13–53:12, known as the Fourth Servant Song, describes the suffering servant in language that corresponds remarkably to the Gospel crucifixion accounts. See also Psalm 22, which describes pierced hands and feet (v.16), divided garments (v.18), and the cry of forsakenness (v.1)—all recorded as fulfilled in the Passion narratives.
4. On the cessation of the daily sacrifice (Tamid) on 17 Tammuz 70 CE, see Josephus, *Wars of the Jews* 6.2.1. This date marks the precise midpoint of Daniel’s 70th week in the Atavist chronological framework: 1,260 days from the Zealot abomination beginning on 26 Tebet 67 CE.
5. For the destruction of genealogical records and its permanent consequences for priestly legitimacy, see Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.7, where he describes the meticulous preservation of

priestly genealogies—records that were housed in the Temple and destroyed with it.

6. The Greek word *ekklēsia* (Strong's 1577) appears 114 times in the New Testament. Its civic usage in the Hellenistic world is well documented in Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1927), 112–113.

7. For the comprehensive list of Greek time indicators and their implications for New Testament eschatology, see the companion volume *Semantic Agreement Between Christians* (True Christian Press, 2024), which examines 22 Greek words and phrases denoting nearness, urgency, and imminence.

8. On the Bar Kokhba revolt (132–136 CE) as the fulfillment of Revelation 20's 'Gog and Magog' invasion, see the companion volume *The Second Jewish Commonwealth: From Cyrus to Simon Bar Kokhba* (True Christian Press, 2025), Part IV.

9. Emperor Hadrian's comprehensive erasure of Jewish Jerusalem is documented in Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 69.12–14. The renaming of the province, the rebuilding of the city as Aelia Capitolina, and the ban on Jewish entry are confirmed by multiple ancient sources.

10. On the distinction between Futurism, Full Preterism, and Atavist eschatology, the key differentiator is the treatment of the Bar Kokhba revolt (132–136 CE). Futurism ignores it entirely as prophetically irrelevant. Full Preterism collapses all fulfillment into 70 CE. Atavism recognizes both the 66–70 CE and 132–136 CE events as constituting the two halves of Daniel's 70th week, separated by a divinely ordained period of mercy.

11. The perpetual nature of the Lord's Supper in the realized kingdom is developed fully in *The Perpetual Lord's Supper in the Kingdom of God* (True Christian Press).

12. Jude 3 uses the Greek aorist passive participle hapax paradotheise ('once for all delivered'), emphasizing the completed, unrepeatable nature of the faith's delivery to the saints—a grammatical point that supports the understanding of Christianity as a fulfilled rather than still-unfolding revelation.

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