

# TRUTH ON TOUGH TEXTS

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## THE ROOTS AND RESULTS OF AMILLENNIALISM

### SELECTED TEXTS

**T**HE SUBJECT OF ESCHATOLOGY (THE DOCTRINE OF THE last things) continues to be a battleground. The arguments are *passionate*, and the books *proliferate*, but the results sadly *polarize*. In fact, as we will note, there are few things as divisive in Christianity today than is eschatology, which compels us to ask, “Is Christ pleased?”

If I may share my heart, I cannot adequately express how deeply this issue has burdened me for several years. The reasons are not just because the position others take on the issue differs from mine, but rather, and far more importantly, because of where a popular view of this actually comes from. In other words, this issue is not just about differing ideas about future events. We are not even going to address those here, in fact, because all of that is just peripheral. The issue is actually about two things that are the real problem: hermeneutics, that is, how we interpret Scripture, and the mixing of Greek philosophy with that very Scripture.

This article, therefore, is a heartfelt, on-my-knees, plea to consider primarily the *roots*, but also the *results*, of Amillennialism. I pray for the reader’s own prayerful consideration.

**NOTE:** This article is more technical than our articles usually are because the subject it addresses is technical. We apologize for this and urge you to read slowly and prayerfully because the subject is a critical one for our day.

#### The Roots

To understand this issue, it is first necessary to observe that it is historical fact that Premillennialism was by far the predominant position of the Early Church. Premillennialism—in that day it was called “Chiliasm” (*kil-ee-az-uhm*), from the Greek *chilias* (1,000)—simply views the 1,000 years of Revelation 20 as being literal, the time when Jesus will establish His kingdom and rule on this earth.

Again, this historical view is beyond argument. One of the best examples was Papias (c. 70–c. 155), Bishop of Hierapolis (modern Pamukkale, Turkey), a disciple of the Apostle John and a friend of Polycarp. Like those two, Papias becomes dear to the heart as one reads him. The early Greek church historian Eusebius of Caesarea (260–340) reports, for example, that Papias wrote: “For I did not, like the multitude, take pleasure in those that speak much, but in those that teach the truth; not in those that relate strange commandments, but in

those that deliver the commandments given by the Lord to faith, and springing from the truth itself.”<sup>1</sup> Despite such a commitment to the Truth, however, it is troubling indeed that in Eusebius’ personal opinion, Papias was “of very limited understanding.”<sup>2</sup> Why? Simply because of his Chiliasm view. Papias wrote, for example, “that there will be a millennium after the resurrection from the dead, when the personal reign of Christ will be established on this earth.”<sup>3</sup> He also described the fertility and peace of the coming Millennium in picturesque language:

The days will come in which the vines shall grow, each having ten thousand branches, and in each branch ten thousand twigs, and in each true twig ten thousand shoots, and in each one of the shoots ten thousand clusters, and on every one of the clusters ten thousand grapes, and every grape when pressed will give five and twenty metretes of wine [i.e., about 225 gallons from each grape]. . . . In like manner . . . a grain of wheat would produce ten thousand ears, and that every ear would have ten thousand grains, and every grain would yield ten pounds of clear, pure, fine flour; and that apples, and seeds, and grass would produce in similar proportions; and that all animals, feeding then only on the productions of the earth, would become peaceable and harmonious, and be in perfect subjection to man.<sup>4</sup>

The clue, then, to Eusebius’ opinion appears immediately before the above criticism, which concerns Papias’

statement that there will be a period of some thousand years after the resurrection of the dead, and that the kingdom of Christ will be set up in material form on this very earth. I suppose he got these ideas through a misunderstanding of the apostolic accounts, not perceiving that the things said by them were spoken mystically in figures.<sup>5</sup>

In other words, Papias’ “limited understanding” was simply because he (as did many others) viewed the return of Christ to be a *literal* 1,000 year reign instead of a *spiritualized* reign, which, as we will see, is based on allegory. Indeed, according to Eusebius, God forbid that we think literally! And where did he get the idea that these things “were spoken mystically in figures”? Well, that is what we are going to find out.

Equally troubling are church historian Philip Schaff’s comments that this notion was “quaint and extravagant,”<sup>6</sup> based chiefly on Revelation 20:1–6, which was “appealed to so constantly by chiliasts in support of their views” that “Dio-

nysius, Eusebius, and others were anxious to disprove its apostolic authorship.”<sup>7</sup> *Did you get that?* It would seem that if one does not like what Scripture says, he need only deny its canonicity. Schaff does, however, admit to the predominate view of the Early Church, even though he rejected it himself:

The most striking point in the eschatology of the ante-Nicene [early church] 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.<sup>8</sup>

For example, Justin Martyr (100–165) wrote this clear statement of Premillennialism:

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, [as] the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare. . . . And further, there was a certain man with us, whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, who prophesied, by a revelation that was made to him, that those who believed in our Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem; and that thereafter the general, and, in short, the eternal resurrection and judgment of all men would likewise take place. Just as our Lord also said, “They shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but shall be equal to the angels, the children of the God of the resurrection.”<sup>9</sup>

As Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930), an undisputed authority on Ante-Nicene<sup>10</sup> church history, also noted:

First in point of time came the faith in the nearness of Christ’s second advent and the establishing of His reign of glory on the earth. Indeed it appears so early that it might be questioned whether it ought not to be regarded as an essential part of the Christian religion.<sup>11</sup>

There is no doubt, and it is utterly foolish to argue otherwise, that “Chiliasm” (Premillennialism) is, in fact, the truly historical view.

So, while in the first three centuries after the Apostolic Age most students of Scripture held to the future establishment of Christ’s literal Kingdom, what happened to change it? The cause of this drift can be illustrated by a three-legged stool, as pictured at right. Remove any one leg and Amillennialism topples over.

To understand fully what happened, it is critical to recognize just how much Greek philosophy influenced the early Church Fathers. To put it simply, in contrast to the Apostolic Fathers (Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Papias), who wrote to *Christians*, the apologists (Tertullian, Aristides, Justin Martyr, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus) wrote to the *Roman state* in an attempt to win them over through philosophy and literary argument. In fact, all the apologists were converted philosophers who remained such instead of becoming exclusively theologians; they considered the use of Greek philosophy to be the way to lead people to Christ. But that clearly violates Romans 1:16: “the gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God unto salvation.” It is not about convincing arguments of philosophy or apologetic proofs. *It is about the power of the Gospel.* Is that not what we who cherish the Doctrines of Sovereign Grace be-

lieve? Paul likewise wrote to the Corinthians, who were steeped in Greek philosophy, that he came to preach the Gospel, not debate in the public forum (1 Cor. 2:1–5).

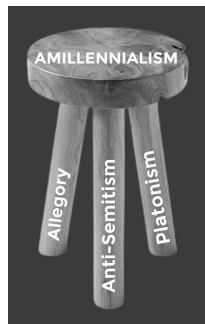
Although Clement of Alexandria (c. 155–c. 215)—not to be confused with Clement of Rome—was a polemicist instead of an apologist (the polemicists wrote to *heretics*), he is a dramatic example. As Philip Schaff put it, “His theology is not a unit, but a confused eclectic mixture of true Christian elements with many Stoic, Platonic, and Philonic ingredients.”<sup>12</sup> In other words, his theology was tainted by Greek philosophy. He felt that philosophy was to be associated with Christianity so the latter could be shown to be the greatest and final philosophy. The danger in such an approach, however, as another historian discerns, is that one can unknowingly blend the two together so much that Christianity ends up being simply a mixture of philosophy and biblical teaching.<sup>13</sup> But that is like mixing oil and water.

*My Dear Reader, it is right here that we find the key to this issue.* The primary cause for the drift away from a premillennial view in the third and fourth centuries was Origen (185–254), who was enamored with Plato. Just as he would influence others, Origen himself was influenced by Philo (c. 20 BC–AD 54), a Jew who not only revered the Mosaic revelation but also had a fondness for Greek metaphysics and was influenced by Greek allegory. That’s right, allegory is rooted in Greek metaphysics. Greeks became troubled by the graphic and scandalous nature of Homer’s eighth century BC epics, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, so by the first century AD, those “disgraceful parts” were taught as allegory, not literal.

So, allegory has a long history but also an even longer influence. As one historian writes, “Platonism greatly shaped and coloured Origen’s whole outlook” and, in fact, “pervaded [his] theology.”<sup>14</sup> Another adds, “As Origen proceeds it becomes apparent that he is a Stoic, a Neo-Pythagorean, a Platonist, and a Gnostic, who is nevertheless resolved to be a Christian.”<sup>15</sup> As we have noted before in this publication,<sup>16</sup> the resulting errors of his mixing of Greek philosophy with Christian theology were positively staggering. As Philip Schaff again writes, “[Origen’s] leaning to idealism, his predilection for Plato, and his noble effort to reconcile Christianity with reason, and to commend it even to educated heathens and Gnostics, led him into many grand and fascinating errors.”<sup>17</sup> What an understatement that is! His allegorical approach to Scripture—which went so far as to say that, “The Scriptures are of little use to those who understand them as they are written”<sup>18</sup>—rendered much of what he wrote to be worthless. Mark it down: *allegory is horrendous error and produces more of the same.* After discussing Platonic philosophy, with its contrast between spirit and matter (dualism), another writer concludes:

Platonic assumptions clearly influenced early Christian leaders such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Augustine. It appears that Platonic and Neo-Platonic influences steered many Christians from a literal understanding of Bible passages in the attempt to make Christianity more acceptable to the Greek mind. Thus, we believe it is valid to conclude that Platonism has affected how many Christians viewed eschatology.<sup>19</sup>

So, influenced by Plato’s *dualism*, Origen, and others,



The three “legs” of Amillennialism

viewed a literal, physical kingdom and its physical blessings as evil, since all matter is evil and only the spiritual is good (this was also at the core of Gnosticism). This prompted the idea of a spiritual kingdom where Christ simply rules presently in the hearts of believers, which is, in part, the very definition of Amillennialism. Origen's dualism went so far, in fact, that he declared that "the resurrection body was purely spiritual," not a literal resurrection body.<sup>20</sup>

We should also note Augustine (354–430) who was similarly influenced. While he was certainly a godly, sincere follower of Christ, he followed Origen into the abyss of allegorical interpretation. In fact, he early entertained the idea of Chiliasm, but in his classic work, *City of God*, he unambiguously wrote that the literal 1,000-year view "would not be objectionable if it were believed that the joys of the saints in that Sabbath shall be spiritual"<sup>21</sup> rather than physical. This obviously renders the six-fold mention of 1,000 years in Revelation 20 to be totally meaningless. To the amillennialist, the Millennium is being fulfilled spiritually through the institutional church in the present age, but how can 2,000 years of the Church mean 1,000? In allegorical interpretation, words (and numbers), therefore, no longer mean what they mean, rather whatever we want them to mean.

Further, while Augustine did believe in a resurrection body, he strongly objected to the view that "those who then rise again shall enjoy the leisure of immoderate carnal banquets, furnished with an amount of meat and drink such as not only to shock the feeling of the temperate, but even to surpass the measure of credulity itself, such assertions can be believed only by the carnal."<sup>22</sup> He was also influenced by his own immoral living before his conversion, which drove him toward asceticism and the rejection of literal, physical, and therefore "carnal" Kingdom blessings. Like many today, Augustine's "personal experience" affected his theology.

And so it was that because of the overwhelming influence of the Alexandrian scholar Origen that the Eastern Church rejected Premillennialism. Of that rejection, Adolf von Harnack again writes, "It was the Alexandrian theology that superseded them; that is to say, Neo-Platonic mysticism triumphed over the early Christian hope of the future," and it was "mysticism" that played a crucial role in delivering "the death blow to Chiliasm in the Greek Church."<sup>23</sup> Around AD 260, in fact, the Greek Church rejected the canonicity of the Book of Revelation! While they restored it to their canon during the Middle Ages, the damage had already been done.

As for the Western Church, while it remained Premillennial longer, this changed in the fourth century when Ambrose and Jerome, who had been taught by Greek theologians, brought that teaching to the West. As already noted, Augustine too contributed to this change. Having adopted Origen's allegorical approach, Augustine's amillennial view became the official doctrine of the Church. *Did you get that?* For 300 years, the Western Church was premillennial, but it changed all because of a man who was poisoned by Greek philosophy, mysticism, and allegory.

*So, what is the root of Amillennialism? Make no mistake: it is pagan dualism and allegory, plain and simple.* Why would any evangelical believe such a view? But many have indeed swallowed it—hook, line, and sinker. This view has been the predominant one throughout church history, dramatically

demonstrating once again the destructive results of blending Christianity with Greek philosophy.

Again, my Dear Reader, this simply cannot be *denied* and should not be *ignored*. This is not opinion; this is historical fact. If I may be lovingly and respectfully bold, it is simply foolish to argue about this. I honestly do not understand why this is even a debate. It is a total enigma to me that Christians not only are drawn into all of this but then actually go to great lengths to defend it. Some, in fact, mock those who, as noted earlier, have a "limited understanding" and believe in something "quaint and extravagant," namely, a literal kingdom on this earth.

If that is not enough, let me say it another way, and please consider this prayerfully: *if allegory did not exist, neither would Amillennialism.* Because of dualistic influence, an adjustment had to be made, and the unequaled master of allegory, Origen, did just that; he allegorized any prophecy of the Kingdom to make it spiritual and figurative, not physical and literal, and Augustine followed right along.

Again, there is no doubt about what happened, which is sadly missed (or just ignored) by many today: *Origen and Augustine deliberately altered biblical hermeneutics.* But what verse of Scripture instructs us to change our hermeneutics when it comes to prophecy? Why did they take the prophecies of Jesus' *first* coming *literally* but view the prophecies of His *second* coming *allegorically* (or spiritually)? That is a staggering contradiction that doesn't seem to bother many today. But such inconsistency did not stop them. Instead of viewing Scripture plainly according to the normal use of language, they allegorized it. Why? *Because they simply did not like the results of literalness.* Their own experience became the ruling factor in interpreting Scripture, and the Church has never recovered. How can we have biblical authority and sufficiency when we spiritualize what it says? It can mean whatever we want it to mean, or it can mean nothing at all.

I should also insert a brief word about *Postmillennialism*. While it takes a little different view of the future—it holds that Jesus will return after the "millennium," which is not a literal 1,000 years but rather a long period of time, after the world has been successfully evangelized—it comes from exactly the same cause, a non-literal, allegorical approach.

Now, I am quite sure that some who are reading this have thought of their "proof texts" (e.g., Lk. 17:21; Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 15:50; 2 Pet. 1:4; Col. 1:27)—all of which are removed from their context—and other arguments. The more of those arguments I read, in fact, the more deeply burdened I became. One such argument, for example, is that this has been the dominant view throughout church history. Yes, but we have shown why that happened. Another argument is that since Augustine believed it, that was good enough, but what makes him the ultimate authority? And speaking of authority, if I may also ask, on whose authority did Augustine transform the kingdom into the Church? To be fair, many modern amillennialists believe in a restored created order in the eternal state,<sup>24</sup> but that changes nothing concerning the origin of Amillennialism (and, frankly, it is also contradictory). Those, and every other argument, ignores the core issue. The simple, indisputable fact remains that Amillennialism was the spawn of allegory that is rooted in Greek dualism—*period*. My Dear Reader, that is inescapable and irrefutable no matter what

other arguments are offered.

## The Results

There is one more leg on that three-legged stool, however, and it is that leg that demonstrates the first of several serious results of Amillennialism—*Anti-Semitism*. Origen wrote:

We may thus assert in utter confidence that the Jews will not return to their earlier situation, for they have committed the most abominable of crimes, in forming this conspiracy against the Savior of the human race . . . hence the city where Jesus suffered was necessarily destroyed, the Jewish nation was driven from its country, and another people was called by God to the blessed election.<sup>25</sup>

Augustine's attitudes are also well-known, being sprinkled throughout his writings. For example:

How hateful to me are the enemies of your Scripture! How I wish that you would slay them (the Jews) with your two-edged sword, so that there should be none to oppose your word! Gladly would I have them die to themselves and live to you!<sup>26</sup>

Others before and after him held the same view, such as Justin Martyr and, even sadder, the "The Golden Mouthed" fourth century Bible expositor John Chrysostom. Since "the Jews killed Jesus," it is argued, they forfeited salvation and God's promises to them, all of which in-turn is now inherited by the Church. Such denial of the promises to Israel, however, is serious error. Why? *Because it is again allegory*. Scripture does not say that. That idea comes directly from allegorizing the text instead of taking it as it reads, which is simply, if I may coin a term, "Origenism." The word "Israel" appears 2,300 times in Scripture, and every single one of them refers to Israel, not the Church, and God will fulfill every promise He has made to her. As we have noted before in this publication, Anti-Semitism is very serious (and dangerous) error, and many Christians today have fallen into it.<sup>27</sup>

Another result of Amillennialism is that it puts one in direct alignment with Roman Catholicism (including its Anti-Semitism), all of which it adopted right from Augustine. Think about that. Since the pope is the Vicar of Christ on earth, he supposedly is ruling over God's Kingdom here and now. Should it not trouble us when we find ourselves in agreement with Rome, especially when we know where the teaching came from? Please consider this: We do not align with Rome's soteriology (doctrine of salvation) or its ecclesiology (doctrine of the church), so why do we embrace its eschatology? How sad it is that while the Reformers fixed the *apostate* errors of Catholicism's soteriology, they failed to fix the *pagan* errors of its eschatology, and so Amillennialism lives on (as do rampant mysticism and allegory, as we have also noted before<sup>28</sup>).

Still another result is a completely incomprehensible Old Testament. By insisting that one cannot rightly interpret the OT without the NT, which is what amillennialists do in violation of basic hermeneutics, this view makes the OT, in and of itself, totally unintelligible to both ancient and modern readers. When the reader comes to a prophetic text, he can't take it the way it reads but has to figure out what it means. In contrast to such ambiguity, it is beyond any doubt whatsoever that the OT prophets spoke of a coming literal kingdom (although some folks nowadays grasp at the wind by absurdly arguing that the prophets were looking for a spiritual king-

dom, not a literal one).

Yet another result of Amillennialism is what amounts to the virtually total destruction of the Book of Revelation. It is no longer a book of light but of darkness. It is no longer a book of prophecy that completes the story of the Bible in the glorious victory of Christ over the world order and His rule on the earth, but rather just another a book of history that is all about AD 70 when all the events of the book supposedly took place, an idea that is simply mind boggling to anyone who sits down and just reads the book. One author, for example, writes this about how to interpret Revelation:

We look at the Idealist approach. . . . This is the view that this book is a symbolic depiction of the spiritual warfare that takes place in every generation until Christ returns. Revelation is a manual of spiritual warfare, and what is described in this book is what Christians of every century have experienced as they fight the good fight of faith.<sup>29</sup>

We lovingly ask, Where does he get that? Answer: *allegory*.

A final result of Amillennialism is the confusion, and even discord, it has caused. After all, Premillennialism came first, so who actually brought discord? If a Christian cannot read their Bible and just believe what they are reading, confusion is inevitable. Please think about this: would anyone who sits down and just reads their Bible come up with Amillennialism on their own? Remember, Origen actually said we cannot do that, that "the Scriptures are of little use to those who understand them as they are written." So, we apparently need Origen, Augustine, a Roman Catholic theologian, or a Protestant amillennialist to explain it. This has been proven, in fact. If you go to China, Central Asia, and other places outside the United States, you find the premillennial view to be predominate. Why? Because those believers just read their Bible instead of the latest book on eschatology. To put it another way, like so much false doctrine, Amillennialism did not come from *reading* Scripture, rather it came by reading *into* Scripture, and that is eisegesis, not exegesis.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, it is also deeply distressing that the information I have presented here is not new, as others have written on this far better than I, but it is ignored by most. Why? Do they think it all lies? Do they need more proof? Why do they persist in following a view of Bible doctrine that was spawned by mysticism, allegory, and Greek philosophy? Pardon me, but again, *why*? If I may also lovingly admonish amillennial pastors, to be consistent, they should tell their people that they believe in the allegorical interpretation of Scripture and will start interpreting *everything* that way, *à la* Origen.

Dear Reader, my desire and purpose in this article is to plead with my brethren to abandon proven error. This is not ambiguous, vague, or unclear. This is not the opinion of those "of very limited understanding." It is historical, hermeneutical, and theological fact. Instead of propagating a worthless allegorical theory, we should be rejoicing that our Lord will institute His literal earthly kingdom just as He promised He would do and will rule with a rod of iron (Ps. 2:9) for a thousand years. Why is the literal view spurned and mocked? Why do so many abhor such grand victory?

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**NOTES**

- <sup>1</sup> Nick Needham, *2000 Years of Christ's Power* (Christian Focus, 2016), Vol. 1, 92.
- <sup>2</sup> Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Eerdmans), Vol. III.39.13.
- <sup>3</sup> Fragments of Papias, VI.
- <sup>4</sup> Fragments of Papias, IV.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ecclesiastical History*, III.39.12.
- <sup>6</sup> Phillip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Eerdmans), Vol. II, 615.
- <sup>7</sup> Eusebius, III.39.12.
- <sup>8</sup> Schaff, Vol. II, 614.
- <sup>9</sup> *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1; Chs. 80, 91, 460, 461.
- <sup>10</sup> Literally, "before Nicaea," this is the period of church history following the Apostolic Age of the first century down to the First Council of Nicaea in 325.
- <sup>11</sup> "Millennium," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Ninth Edition, 314.
- <sup>12</sup> Schaff, Vol. II, 783.
- <sup>13</sup> Earle Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries*, Third Edition (Zondervan, 1954, 1981, 1996), 109.
- <sup>14</sup> Needham, Vol. 1, 132, 139.
- <sup>15</sup> Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization III: Caesar and Christ* (Simon and Schuster, 1944), 614.
- <sup>16</sup> For more about allegory, see TOTT Issue 118 (May/June 2019), "The Lessons of David and Goliath."
- <sup>17</sup> Schaff, Vol. II, 791.
- <sup>18</sup> Cited in Johann Lorenz Mosheim, *An Ecclesiastical History, Ancient And Modern, From The Birth Of Christ To The Beginning Of The*

- Present Century* (New York: Evert Duylinck, 1824, from the 1764 edition translated by Archibald Maclaine), Vol. 1, 218, note h.
- <sup>19</sup> Michael J. Vlach, "Platonism's Influence on Christian Eschatology" (p. 11), [https://www.academia.edu/5657066/Platonisms\\_Influence\\_on\\_Christian\\_Eschatology](https://www.academia.edu/5657066/Platonisms_Influence_on_Christian_Eschatology) (accessed 12/19/2021).
- <sup>20</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *A Brief History of Heaven* (Blackwell, 2003), 34.
- <sup>21</sup> Augustine, *The City of God*, Book XX, Chapter 7.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>23</sup> "Millennium," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Ninth Edition, 316.
- <sup>24</sup> Amillennialist Anthony Hoekema, for example, writes: "The Bible assures us that God will create a new earth on which we shall live to God's praise in glorified, resurrected bodies" (*The Bible and the Future* [Eerdmans, 1979], 274).
- <sup>25</sup> *Against Celsus*.
- <sup>26</sup> *Confessions*, 12.14.
- <sup>27</sup> See the "A Succinct Theology of the Jews" section in TOTT Issue 119 (July/Aug. 2019), "Perplexing Passages (2)."
- <sup>28</sup> See TOTT Issue 120 (Sept./Oct. 2019), "Mysticism and Spiritual Formation."
- <sup>29</sup> Max Doner, *Revelation: A Manual of Spiritual Warfare* (Reformed Lighthouse Press, 2022), Vol. 1, 52.
- <sup>30</sup> *Eisegesis* ("to lead into") reads *into* the text what the interpreter wishes to find or thinks he finds there. It expresses the reader's own subjective ideas, not the meaning that is in the text. *Exegesis* ("to lead out of") is legitimate interpretation that reads *out of* the text what the original author or authors meant to convey.

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