

## 2026-03-25 The Motive for Futurism – Escape!

[\(Intro Video\)](#) - Two definitions

- **Futurism** – nearly all Biblical prophecy pertains to the future and leads to a rapture.
- **Preterism** – Nearly all Biblical prophecy has a past fulfillment. The Book of Revelations points to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD.

Two helpful Preterist Resources:

- The Gary Demar Podcast - [Eschatology and Economics](#)
- [The Fulfilled Prophecy](#) Facebook Group

Every major theological controversy has two layers: the intellectual argument on the surface and the emotional need underneath. Most people spend their energy in their head and never connect with their heart or God's. This blog is about the second layer, the heart — because that's where the decisions and beliefs actually live.

The key to clarity in any theological debate is recognizing that Sola Scriptura alone never settles it. How we interpret the Bible is an academic exercise — one that carries the pretension of logical objectivity while being driven by something the proof texts never fully reveal. Our hearts are always driving the bus, and our minds are covering our tracks with theological justification. Ignoring this reality is both intellectually dishonest and biblically unfounded (Jer 17:9, Prov 4:23).

What is not in question is the theological outcome: dispensationalism contained in the Scofield Reference Bible published in 1909 elevated ethnic Israel to a category that the New Covenant specifically dissolved (Gal 3:28-29), inserted a rapture that the early church never taught, and handed believers a theology that made cultural withdrawal feel like faithfulness. The question we're asking is, "Is that real?" or could it be a fabrication with a motive? Hal Lindsey's *Late Great Planet Earth* came out the year I got saved. I didn't expect to graduate from college. It was sold as sound doctrine in churches and on Christian TV for decades. Now the Lord is exposing it, and for many, letting go is hard.

### *The Emotional Engine: Futurism as Escape*

Now the heart layer.

Futurism — dispensational eschatology — offered something deeply appealing to believers experiencing real suffering: ESCAPE. God was coming back in revival, in a rapture, in a second coming, to fix everything broken and painful. All the believer needed to do was wait faithfully, endure, and hold the line until He arrived. *I am a servant waiting for Him to do it.* My role in history is passive. My posture is anticipation. My theology gives me permission to disengage from a world that is, by doctrinal definition, headed for destruction anyway.

Futurism (Zionism for Israel and the rapture for the church) has always functioned as the theological drug of choice for dulling the pain of personal tribulation and the ache of purposelessness. If everything burns anyway, there's no reason to build. No reason to fight for institutions. No reason to engage politics, business, or culture with wholehearted Kingdom intention. The eschatology creates a permission structure for abdication dressed up as piety.

This is not a criticism of the people who hold this theology — many of them are sincere believers who love God deeply. It is a diagnosis of the stronghold itself: an intellectual castle defending a deception that keeps sons and daughters out of the purpose they were made for, with the emotional comfort of a narrative that promises rescue without requiring co-laboring.

## What Preterism Opens

The genius of preterism is not that it wins the hermeneutical argument — though it does. The genius is what it unlocks.

When the tribulation is understood as the first-century judgment fulfilled in AD 70, the cross as the decisive defeat of the principalities, and the Kingdom as actively advancing now — sons and daughters are no longer waiting for history to begin. They step into what creation has been groaning for (Rom 8:19): a generation of sons and daughters doing the greater works (Jn 14:12), doing what their Father is doing (Jn 5:19), saying what their Father is saying (Jn 12:49), and feeding on the Shewbread of His purpose (Jn 4:34, Rom 8:28).

This is a generation that will engage in Father's vision to bring His Kingdom to earth (Mt 6:10), have the courage to ask for the nations (Ps 2:8), and own the reformational work of blessing all peoples and families of the earth (Gen 12:3). Sons and daughters who are overcomers of every obstacle the enemy can erect (Rev 2-3), who carry the privilege of releasing the Spirit of Truth (Heb 4:12) to lovingly dismantle strongholds — arguments and pretensions that defend deception — in the minds of men and women, freeing captives so they too can experience the joy set before them (2 Cor 10:3-5).

The rapture was never the point. The Reformation is; Nations are:

### ***The Nations belong to Him...***

***Gen. 12:2-3*** – I will make you into a great **nation**... all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

***Deut 32:8*** – When the Most High gave to the **nations** their inheritance

***Ps 2:8*** – Ask of me, and I will make the **nations** your inheritance

***Ps 72:11*** – all kings will fall down before You; All **nations** shall serve You.

***Ps 82:8-9*** – Rise up, O God, judge the earth, for all the **nations** are your inheritance.

***Ps 86:9*** – All the **nations** you have made will come and worship... they will bring glory to your name.

***Ps 115:16*** – The highest heavens belong to the Lord, but **the earth** he has given to man.

***Matt 28:19-20*** – Therefore go and make disciples of all **nations**... teaching them to obey (do)

***Mark 11:17*** – My house will be called a house of prayer for all **nations**.

***Acts 14:16*** – In the past, he let all **nations** go their own way

***Rev 5:9*** – with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe, language, people, and **nation**.

***Rev 5:10*** – And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on **the earth**.

***Rev 15:4*** – For you alone are holy. All **nations** will come and worship before you

***Rev 22:2*** – And the leaves of the tree are for the **healing of the nations**.

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*The appendices below trace the historic background of the whole rapture framework. If you're still inside that stronghold, the history may help you understand why the motive for building it was always more emotional and political than exegetical.*

- *Appendix A – The Historical Roots: How Dispensationalism Arrived*
- *Appendix B – The Motive for Jewish Zionists to Use Scofield*
- *Appendix C - The Network Behind the Scofield Bible*
- *Appendix D – The Longer History Behind “Why Futurism?”*

## *Appendix A – The Historical Roots: How Dispensationalism Arrived*

To understand why futurism took hold, it helps to trace how it entered the mainstream of American Christianity. Dispensationalism — the idea that history is divided into distinct eras (dispensations) with different rules for different peoples, culminating in a rapture, a seven-year tribulation, and a literal Jewish millennium — was not the theology of the early church. It was systematized by Anglo-Irish lawyer-turned-clergyman John Nelson Darby in the early nineteenth century and was a minority theological position for decades.

What changed everything was a single book published in 1909: the Scofield Reference Bible.

Cyrus Scofield was a Civil War veteran with a checkered personal history — including fraud convictions, an abandoned first wife and children, and a falsely claimed Doctor of Divinity degree. He was not a trained scholar. What he was, was well-connected. He came under the mentorship of prominent dispensationalists, moved in influential New York circles, secured access to the prestigious Oxford University Press, and produced what became the first widely distributed study Bible in English — one in which Darby's dispensational footnotes appeared on the same page as the biblical text, making it nearly impossible for ordinary readers to distinguish Scripture from Scofield's interpretation of it.

The Bible sold more than two million copies by the end of World War II. Largely through its influence, dispensational premillennialism became the default eschatology of American evangelicalism. It created the theological infrastructure for Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth*, the *Left Behind* series, and generations of end-times speculation that have shaped American foreign policy, Middle East engagement, and the church's relationship to culture.

What is not in question is the theological outcome: dispensationalism elevated ethnic Israel to a category that the New Covenant specifically dissolved (Gal 3:28-29), inserted a rapture that the early church never taught, and handed believers a theology that made cultural withdrawal feel like faithfulness.

## *Appendix B – The Motive for Jewish Zionists to Use Schofield*

This is one of the better-documented aspects of the whole story, because the Zionists themselves were fairly explicit about it — at least in retrospect. There were three interlocking motives.

### *1. Christian Numerical Majority—Needing a Theological Solution*

In the early twentieth century, political Zionism had a fundamental obstacle. Theodor Herzl's movement to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine required the backing of Western governments — primarily Britain and the United States. But those governments were overwhelmingly Christian, and the prevailing Christian theology at the time — whether Catholic, mainline Protestant, or Reformed — had no category for a restored ethnic Israel. Replacement theology (the view that the church had inherited the covenant promises) was the dominant framework. Under that theology, a Jewish state in Palestine was simply a secular colonial project, not a divine mandate.

The Zionist political calculation was straightforward: if you could persuade tens of millions of American Christians that restoring Israel to the land was *the fulfillment of biblical prophecy* — that supporting a Jewish state was literally doing God's will — you would transform a foreign policy liability into a constituency. Untermyer was explicit enough about this that Canfield and Lutz could document it: Scofield's theology was "most helpful in getting Fundamentalist

Christians to back the international interest in one of Untermeyer's pet projects — the Zionist Movement."

The target audience was not Jewish. It was the American evangelical church.

## 2. *The Timeline Was Urgent*

The Scofield Reference Bible was published in 1909. The Balfour Declaration — in which Britain pledged to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine — came in 1917, addressed directly to Lord Walter Rothschild. The founding of the modern state of Israel came in 1948. These events did not occur in a theological vacuum. The two million copies of the Scofield Bible sold by the end of World War II had spent decades pre-conditioning American evangelicals to interpret the return of Jews to Palestine as prophetic fulfillment rather than colonial displacement. By the time Israel declared statehood, there was already a massive American constituency primed to celebrate it as a miracle rather than question it as a geopolitical event.

The theological infrastructure preceded the political outcome by roughly forty years — which is exactly how long-term influence campaigns work.

## 3. *Neutralizing Christian Resistance to Jewish Financial & Political Power*

This motive is the most sensitive and the least often stated plainly, but it is present in the Scofield Bible's own footnotes. Scofield's commentary on Genesis 12:3 — *"I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee"* — was interpreted to mean that any criticism of the Jewish people as a collective, or of Jewish political interests, constituted a violation of divine covenant and would bring God's judgment on the critic. Later editions of the Oxford Bible made this explicit, adding the note: *"For a nation to commit the sin of anti-Semitism brings inevitable judgment."*

The practical effect was to make theological criticism of Jewish Zionism — or of the Israeli state after 1948 — virtually impossible within evangelical Christianity without triggering accusations of cursing Abraham's seed. It created a self-sealing system: the theology that drove Christian support for Zionism also immunized that support from critique. Any son or daughter who raises the questions this blog raises will be familiar with the reflexive response — *"You're cursing Israel."*

Untermeyer understood what he was building. He was counsel to some of the most powerful financial institutions in America, president of the primary Zionist fundraising body, instrumental in the creation of the Federal Reserve, and a master of using legal and institutional architecture to produce lasting outcomes. Shaping Christian theology through a credentialed publisher was not a crude manipulation — it was a sophisticated long-term play by someone who thought in generational terms.

## *What This Means Theologically*

The motive clarifies the outcome. This was not primarily a theological project. It was a political project that needed theological clothing, and it found a willing instrument in Scofield and a willing publisher in a dispensationalist at Oxford.

Sons engaging this material are not being asked to adopt anti-Jewish sentiment — which is both un-Christlike and strategically foolish. They are being asked to recognize that a major theological framework shaping American foreign policy, Middle East engagement, and the church's relationship to culture was constructed with a specific political outcome in mind. The

question is not whether Jewish people are loved by God — of course they are, and the gospel is for them as well. The question is whether a theology assembled to serve a geopolitical agenda should be treated as revelation, and whether sons operating from Better Covenant Theology need to inherit its blind spots.

The answer to Zionism's manipulation of Christian theology is not hostility toward Jewish people. It is the gospel — which is the only thing the Scofield framework actually withholds from them by treating them as already included through ethnic covenant rather than invited in through the Door.

### *Appendix C - The Network Behind the Scofield Bible*

The documented funders of the Scofield Reference Bible were two Plymouth Brethren businessmen — Alwyn Ball Jr. of New York and John T. Pirie of Chicago — confirmed by Scofield's own acknowledgment that they "made it possible for me to prepare The Bible Study Bible." Both men were committed dispensationalists who shared Scofield's theological convictions, and their funding was sincere rather than strategic in any conspiratorial sense.

But the story of how Scofield got access to elite publishing and European research trips is more complex.

In 1901, Scofield was admitted to the Lotos Club — an exclusive New York literary society whose membership included some of the most influential men in American finance, media, and politics. Biographer Joseph Canfield observed that Scofield's admission "could not have been sought by Scofield," and concluded that "someone was directing the career of C.I. Scofield." The most credible candidate in Canfield's analysis was Samuel Untermeyer, who sat on the club's executive committee.

**Samuel Untermeyer** was by any measure a remarkable figure. A German-Jewish immigrant's son who graduated from Columbia Law School and founded one of Wall Street's most powerful firms — Guggenheimer, Untermeyer & Marshall — he became the first American lawyer to earn a million-dollar fee on a single case. He was counsel for the 1912 Congressional Pujo Committee that investigated the "money trust" and played a substantial role in drafting the legislation that created the Federal Reserve System. He was president of Keren Hayesod, the primary Zionist fundraising organization in America. He was, in short, simultaneously at the center of American finance and American Zionism.

His connection to Scofield is credibly documented as facilitation rather than outright funding. Professor David Lutz writes directly: "*Untermeyer used Scofield, a Kansas City lawyer with no formal training in theology, to inject Zionist ideas into American Protestantism. Untermeyer and other wealthy and influential Zionists whom he introduced to Scofield promoted and funded the latter's career, including travel in Europe.*" Those European research trips — which Scofield himself could not have afforded on his \$600 annual income from the Dallas church — ultimately produced the fateful meeting with the Oxford University Press.

**Henry Frowde**, publisher of Oxford University Press in Britain, met Scofield during one of these European trips and "expressed immediate interest" in the project. The reason is significant: according to his own biography, Frowde was a lifelong member of the "Exclusive Brethren" — the very wing of the Plymouth Brethren that had followed John Nelson Darby in 1848, making Frowde a committed dispensationalist before Scofield walked in the door. Oxford was not a neutral academic publisher who stumbled onto an interesting manuscript. Frowde's prior

theological commitments made him a natural champion of the project, and he fast-tracked publication through one of the most prestigious academic imprints in the English-speaking world.

Regarding Rothschild involvement specifically: the direct connection lacks primary source documentation. What is documented is that Untermeyer was counsel to V. Henry Rothschild Co. and operated within financial networks that had Rothschild adjacency, and that the Balfour Declaration of 1917 — addressed directly to Lord Walter Rothschild as head of the Zionist Federation — appeared the same year as Scofield's revised edition. Whether those connections constitute coordination or historical coincidence is genuinely contested. What is not contested is the outcome: Oxford University Press retained the copyright — not Scofield — and after his death in 1921, continued editing the Bible in subsequent editions, with the 1967 edition adding substantially more pro-Zionist notes and removing original Scofield text that failed to advance Zionist aims quickly enough.

The structure of who owned what matters theologically more than who funded what. Scofield wrote footnotes. Oxford owned the book. And the book, not the man, is what shaped a century of American evangelical foreign policy.

## *Appendix D – The Longer History Behind “Why Futurism?”*

No single moment caused the drift. It was a confluence of at least five major forces — historical, political, sociological, and intellectual — that together pushed the church away from the "already fulfilled" reading of prophecy and toward expecting events still to come.

### *1. The Church Was Still Being Persecuted After 70 AD*

The single most powerful driver was simple lived experience. If Jesus' prophecies about tribulation, the "abomination of desolation," and divine judgment were all wrapped up in 70 AD, then Christians living through Domitian's persecution (81–96 AD), Trajan's rescripts against Christians (c. 112 AD), the Decian and Valerian persecutions, and the Diocletianic terror had a problem: their suffering had no prophetic meaning.

Futurism gave that suffering cosmic significance. Writers like Irenaeus (c. 130–202 AD) and Tertullian (c. 155–220 AD) directly tied the persecutions they were living through to the Antichrist figure and the coming tribulation, framing their martyrs as participants in end-times drama. As one source notes, Tertullian "linked Roman oppression to apocalyptic themes, portraying persecutors as tools of Satan facing divine judgment." Persecution made futurism pastorally necessary.

### *2. The Bar Kokhba Revolt (132–135 AD) Reset the Clock*

The second Jewish revolt under Bar Kokhba was a watershed moment that accelerated the drift. It forced a complete ideological separation between Christianity and Judaism, as Christians refused to join and Bar Kokhba reportedly ordered the persecution of Christians who would not renounce Jesus.

After Hadrian crushed the revolt, Jews were banned from Jerusalem entirely, and Judea was renamed "Syria Palaestina."

The church was now overwhelmingly Gentile and geographically removed from Palestine. This meant the Hebraic, temple-centered context for reading Matthew 24 and Daniel — the context

in which a "70 AD fulfillment" reading makes the most natural sense — was increasingly alien to church leaders growing up in Antioch, Lyons, Carthage, and Alexandria.

The further the church moved from its Jewish roots, the harder it became to feel the urgency of Jerusalem's destruction as the climax of redemptive history.

### *3. Irenaeus Systematized a Futurist Framework That Stuck*

The pivotal intellectual figure is Irenaeus of Lyons (died c. 202 AD). Writing *Against Heresies* around 180 AD, he produced the first systematic eschatology weaving together Daniel, the Olivet Discourse, and Revelation into a coherent future-oriented schema. He explicitly placed the 70th week of Daniel in the future, linking it to a coming Antichrist who would reign for three-and-a-half years in a rebuilt Jerusalem.

Irenaeus also argued — crucially and controversially — that Revelation was written under Domitian (c. 95 AD), not under Nero, which put the entire book after the fall of Jerusalem and therefore impossible to interpret as referring to 70 AD.

One historian bluntly calls this "the turning point from which Christian understanding of eschatology has never recovered." Because Irenaeus was so widely read, respected, and cited — and because he was directly countering heresies — his futurist framework became the dominant template for later writers like Hippolytus and Tertullian.

### *4. Chiliasm (Premillennialism) Was Emotionally Compelling to Martyrs*

Closely related was the massive appeal of chiliasm — the belief in a literal future thousand-year earthly reign of Christ. Historian Philip Schaff noted that chiliasm was the dominant eschatological view of the ante-Nicene church, held by Barnabas, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and others.

For communities living under Roman oppression, chiliasm was not abstract theology — it was hope. The promise that Christ would physically return, defeat Rome, and reign on earth was the martyrs' comfort.

Preterism, by contrast, offered no such dramatic future vindication; the great crisis was in the past. You can see why a church bleeding martyrs under Roman emperors found chiliasm far more compelling than a framework in which the climactic prophecies were already over.

### *5. The Alexandrian Allegorical School Cut Both Ways*

Ironically, Origen (c. 185–254 AD) — who clearly saw Daniel's 70 weeks as fulfilled in the first century — simultaneously introduced allegorical methods that undermined literalist preterist readings of other passages. His spiritualizing approach to prophecy spread through the Alexandrian school and shaped Eusebius and later Augustine. When Augustine (354–430 AD) completed the shift to amillennialism — teaching that the "thousand years" of Revelation 20 referred to the present age of the church, not a future event — he was drawing on Origen's allegorical legacy.

Augustine himself had previously been a chiliast, but changed his mind, largely because he found the earthly, sensual descriptions of the millennial kingdom theologically crude. His *City of God* made amillennialism the standard Western view for over a thousand years.

### *Constantine Changed Everything Political*

The conversion of Constantine (312 AD) and the Edict of Milan (313 AD) administered the coup de grâce to any lingering sense of urgency about fulfilled prophecy. Suddenly the church was

not a persecuted sect but the favored religion of the empire. The futurist and chiliastic hope — rooted in the experience of oppression and the cry for vindication — lost its emotional fuel.

As one timeline of eschatological history notes, by the mid-400s "the return of Christ didn't feel super imminent anymore," and this accelerated the shift to Augustine's amillennialism. The kingdom of God seemed, in some sense, to have already arrived in the form of a Christian empire — making both urgent futurism and strict preterism less pressing.

### *The Overlooked Reality*

It is worth noting, as the research makes clear, that the drift was never total or uniform. Even through the patristic era, voices like Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, Chrysostom, and Augustine himself (on specific passages) explicitly linked the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD to the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecies in Matthew 24 and Daniel.

The 5th-century commentator Andreas of Cappadocia acknowledged that "there are not lacking those who apply [Revelation 6–7] to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus." The preterist strand never fully disappeared — it was gradually overshadowed rather than refuted.