

Thirteen Theories

To Rock Your World

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P R E F A C E

Welcome to what we hope will be an interesting, challenging and enjoyable excursion into an arena of ideas not many have visited. Though theories about God, the devil, the afterlife, and the times in which we live abound, few people are paying attention. And fewer still are actively seeking to understand. We trust you are one of those few.

The Bible declares that the time of the end will be just like the days of Noah in which men were “eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage” until destruction suddenly overtook them.¹ Most people are in that same condition today, pursuing wealth, pleasure and personal achievement, or simply trying to survive, completely oblivious to the storm clouds brooding on the horizon. You are probably not one of those people, or you wouldn’t be reading this book. But perhaps our perspective will give even you new tools by which to evaluate this life and these days.

On the other hand, you may be an “unbeliever” who has picked up this book merely out of curiosity. If that is the case, we welcome you. We hope you find this more than a little enlightening.

Though the focus of this book is primarily spiritual, and that from a Christian perspective, it is also intensely practical. That is, it contains information that has the potential of impacting your present life in astounding ways, whether you are a “believer” or not. In other words, it’s not all “pie in the sky.” There is much here that could have direct application to, and implications for, your own life and the lives of those you love.

¹ Matthew 24:38-39

And though basically Christian in orientation, this book does not always take a *modern* Christian perspective. If you are already a believer, do not let that throw you. The modern church is not without error. In fact, the church in any age is not without error. Indeed the apostle Paul suggested that, after his departure, false doctrine, already nipping at his heels everywhere he went, would rise up *within* the church he loved and fought to protect.² Our goal is truth here, wherever we find it (i.e., in the contemporary church or the ancient church, or even, pray tell, in our own experience or the world at large). Consequently, we would make a humble suggestion at this point: If you are wearing the “**spectacles**” of a particular Christian tradition, denomination or systematic theology, consider taking them off now. You will gain much more from this book if you do. You can put them back on later if you wish.

If you have not yet embraced Christianity, you, too, may be wearing spectacles. Spectacles of skepticism or spectacles of unbelief. For the sake of this discussion, we’d ask you to approach this material with as open a mind as you can. You can always close it again later. (Just *kidding!*)

We have tried to make this book user-friendly. We hope the efforts we’ve made will help you assimilate the concepts more fully and not be left with more questions than answers. You will note that, at strategic points, we have used “pull-outs,” or colored blocks of text like the one below, to provide background information for readers who are not well-versed in the Christian faith or the Bible. These will fill in more detail surrounding the particular issue at hand (noted in bold type), without burdening the well-informed reader. Feel free to skip them if they do not fill a need or if you are already familiar with the foundational concepts, which will make for speedier reading. But please *do* read them if you find yourself lost or confused by the larger context.

We urge all of our readers to start at the Preface and read straight through to the end of the Appendices without skipping any chapters. We also encourage you to read the footnotes, many of which contain valuable insights not expressed in the text. This will provide the most thorough understanding of the

² Acts 20:29-31a says “I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be on the alert...”

material and will help you to arrive at appropriate conclusions. For the most part, each theory is built on the one preceding it, thus skipping around or picking and choosing your own order is not advised.

Christian theologies come in many flavors, shapes and colors, as do those of other religions. Over the centuries, a variety of doctrinal permutations have arisen as we Christians have tried to comprehend and define some of the more challenging aspects of our common heritage. Where disagreements have been intense, churches have often divided and become adversarial with one another. Probably the most dramatic example of this is seen between Catholics and Protestants, who have often formally or informally excommunicated one another from the family of faith and even killed each other over differing doctrines. These disagreements have become institutionalized in many cases and whole denominations and even seminaries have been built around a particular perspective or set of doctrines.

These differences tend to keep Christians apart rather than bringing them together, where their combined efforts could accomplish much good. Sometimes rigidly held ideas, when founded in prejudice and fear, can prevent us from apprehending the truth of other points of view. Not that there aren't doctrines important enough to divide over, but they are few. We are trying to seek truth and ask that you, too, make that your focus and priority. We all have preconceived ideas that act like "**spectacles**" or filters that can blind us to certain realities. Yours may be different from mine, but we all have them. We need to make a conscious decision to set them aside, even if temporarily, while we examine new ideas. If our beliefs are as true as we think they are, we needn't fear looking at other perspectives.

This work is a compilation of several theories, some of which came to us by way of **revelation** in one form or another. A few of them we have later discovered in other Christian writings, though usually not contemporary ones. Some we have not seen elsewhere. We present them here so you can think about them, synthesize them, and evaluate whether they do or do not reflect your experience, perspective or grasp of reality (i.e., truth).

In most cases, the ideas presented here are not presently subject to proof (though they may one day be). That is why they are "theories." Nevertheless, their subject matter has eternal significance and consequences and, in any case, they involve your relatively immediate future, and mine. It is moving very fast in our direction. We need to be ready. Jesus said this quite clearly: "Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps alight. And be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks....You, too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect." (Luke 12:35-37a, 40)

If this was true then, it is only more true now.

There is danger, then, in living a distracted life. If we are caught up and absorbed by the cares of this world—by making money, buying property, planning for retirement, and all sorts of other temporal affairs and entertainments, we could easily miss what is most important. Our minds and hearts will be focused elsewhere and we will be taken by surprise. One of the purposes of this book is to make sure that doesn't happen to *you*. But the reality is, it's up to each one of us to make sure we are paying attention. Jesus said, "If any man has ears to hear, let him hear." (Mark 4:23) That puts the responsibility squarely on our own individual shoulders.

It may surprise you, but **revelation** is still a valid way of receiving spiritual truth from God. Paul says in Eph. 1:15-18: "For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you, and your love for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him." We believe this refers to insight, or the ability to see and understand the deeper implications of the Scriptures and of faith, but also the ability to know *God* deeply, intimately and personally. These early 1st century Christians did not have a New Testament such as we have today. Many of them were illiterate, poor, and unable to procure their own copies of the various writings and letters. They relied on the Holy Spirit to lead them into all truth, often without a relevant text to refer to. Though the Scriptures are God-breathed we do not believe this is the only vehicle through which God may speak to us (nor do we credit the manuscripts we have at our disposal with inerrancy, since they sometimes differ with each other). The Holy Spirit is our counselor, teacher and guide and He is not limited by the availability of paper, ink, money, literacy skills, suitable translations or any other resource.

The heart is educated by God. It is informed by many things, (i.e., abuse, loss, trauma, good or bad parenting, abandonment, indoctrination, religion, etc.) but it is *educated* by a relationship with God. The Bible is replete with examples of individuals hearing from God directly, in a variety of ways in both the Old and New Testaments. And though tradition has it that the written Word is complete now and we are not to add to it, we *are* to have a real and vital relationship with the God of the Bible, one that permeates our everyday experience. We are to walk with Him and talk with Him on a daily basis. These are not just one-way conversations. They are dynamic, living, interactive, and full of insight for the eager student of God's wisdom. In this sense, God is still writing His living Word, on our hearts and in our lives. We Christians should each be writing our own book of Acts day by day through the power of the Holy Spirit as He unfolds His purposes in our own individual lives.

At first glance, this book may appear to be a compilation of a disconnected set of religious and pseudo-political ideas. However, the astute reader may notice that it actually comprises an ordered arrangement or progression of concepts. Theories 1-4 deal with the question of who God is and what He's up to. Theories 5-13 have to do with where we are on God's prophetic timetable and what's coming next. And

the Afterword and Appendices address the spiritual implications and consequences of our choices in relation to God's overall plan.

In short, this book asks three questions:

- 1) What's the big picture?
- 2) What's going to happen in the near future, and how will it affect me?
- 3) And, what should I do about it now?

We are living in phenomenal days. Days of global trade, global communication, global travel, global cooperation *and* global conflict. One day soon there will be global government, and a global religion. It will be sold as the final solution to the ills of our world. As the *only* way to fix our problems. Most people will accept what they are told. The arguments will be persuasive and no other viable solutions will be forthcoming. There is an old saying: forewarned is forearmed. We hope this book arms you with enough truth that you will be able to resist the seduction of our age.

A very wise monk by the name of Brother Lawrence once wrote: "Let us make way for grace; let us redeem the lost time, for perhaps we have but little left. Death follows us close; let us be well prepared for it; for we die but once, and a miscarriage there is irretrievable."³

³ The Practice of the Presence of God, Brother Lawrence, ©1958, 1967, Fleming H. Revell, Spire Books, div. of Baker Book House, 1999 edition, p.42.