

THE LOSS OF ARGUMENTATION

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Have you noticed that history (providence!) is slowly, but inexorably stripping the millennial world of its most essential arguments? It seems as if God is turning events in such a way that no matter what the millennialists have and do argue, that the turning of the wheel of time refutes their arguments. Here is what we mean.

For many, many years, i.e. centuries, even, end time prognosticators, and this is true of dispensationalism once that doctrine became prominent, the argument was made that one day is with the Lord a thousand years.¹ What this means is that the “seventh day of creation” i.e. at the end of the six thousand years of earth’s history, and beginning the seven thousandth, the millennium would begin. As the Y2K time approached (the year 2000), many millennialists claimed that the sixth thousandth year was closing and that the arrival of the year 2000 would bring the rapture and end of the Christian age. However, as the year 2000 came and went, even though I have personally searched the writings of dispensationalists for references to the “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years” argument as proof that the end is near, I have found *none*! There is a strange, deafening silence from the millennial camp in regard to the calculation of the Lord’s coming based on that paradigm. Time, history, and the Lord have effectively stripped millennialism of one of its key arguments!

1948 The Super Sign of the End!

There is another argument that is even more critical to the millennial view of things than the “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years” argument, and the passing of time will absolutely, positively refute the millennial argument. That argument is that the restoration of Israel in 1948 constitutes, “The Super Sign of the End Times.”

For brevity, allow me to enunciate the millennial view of signs and the significance of 1948.

1.) Millennialists believe that the generation that sees the signs of the end is the generation to see the end.

Ice and LaHaye say, “Christ says, ‘When you see all these things, know that it is near.’ (V. 33). The signs are a package. When they are truly fulfilled, they will be fulfilled all at once. That seems to be the gist of this parable, as well the comment that follow it. Therefore, the most reasonable interpretation of v. 34 is this: Christ is saying that the same generation alive when the true labor pains begin will be the same generation that sees the delivery. These things, when they happen, will not stretch out across generations.”² On page 93 of the same work, Ice cites, with approval, Daryl Bock, who says: “What Jesus is saying is that the generation that sees the beginning of the end, also sees the end. When the signs come, they will proceed quickly; they will not drag on for many generations. It will happen within a generation.”³

2.) Millennialists believe that *our current generation* is the generation to see the signs of the end.⁴

Ice and LaHaye claim that our generation “has more signs to indicate that Christ could come in our lifetime than any generation.” (*Charting*, 119). Jeffrey claims: “Every generation for the last 2000 years has thought it is the last generation, yet it has not occurred. Skeptics correctly point out that these hopes have never yet been realized. These skeptics ask, ‘Why should we believe that our generation is the one that will witness the return of Christ when other generations were disappointed in their equally

sincerely hopes?’ This is a legitimate question and deserves a serious answer. The truth is that no previous generation has ever witnessed the fulfillment of even a fraction of the prophecies that we have seen since the mid-twentieth century.” (*Return*, 203).

John Walvoord claimed, “Never before in history have all the factors been present for the fulfillment of prophecy relating to end times religious trends and events. Only in our generation...”⁵ Dehaan wrote, “Today for the first time in human history all the signs of the times are present, at one time. I do not know of a single sign which needs to be fulfilled before the Lord Jesus Christ will return.”⁶

Consider how important all of these statements are in regard to the claims that 1948 is the Super Sign of the End. If our generation has and is seeing more signs of the end than any other generation in history, and if our generation has seen the greatest sign of the end that could possibly be, then, this *demand*s that our generation must be the generation of the parousia. If every sign of the end foretold by the Lord has been and is fulfilled in our generation, and if the greatest sign of all is present in our generation, then could any other generation even remotely be considered the terminal generation? Jesus said that the generation that saw the signs would be the generation of the end (Matthew 24:32-34). Thus, if in fact our generation is the generation that has and is seeing all of the signs, including the ultimate sign, then there is no escaping the fact that our generation must be the generation of the parousia.

Ice attempts to avoid the force of these facts by denying, in contradiction of virtually all of the other major millennial writers of the day, that none of the signs of Matthew 24 are being fulfilled today. Whereas his writing partner, Tim LaHaye is adamant that there has been a veritable parade of signs from Matthew 24:4f fulfilled in our generation, (*Charting*, 36). Ice claims however, that none of the signs of Matthew 24 will be fulfilled until after the rapture.⁷ In reality, *this does not help at all!*

If the generation to see the signs is the generation to see the parousia, and Jesus emphatically said this, then since 1948 is the supposed Super Sign of the End, then this demands that the rapture, the end of the church age, and the Second Coming seven years later, must all occur in the same crucial, terminal generation! There is no escaping this fact, without abandoning the argument that 1948 was the greatest sign of the end.

3.) Millennialists believe that the restoration of Israel in 1948 is the most important end time sign of all.

Grant Jeffrey says, “Without a doubt the rebirth of the nation of Israel on May 15, 1948, is one of the most extraordinary of all the prophecies in the ancient scriptures. It is not only historically unprecedented but the prophecy of the rebirth of Israel is also unique in that it cannot easily be fulfilled again in any generation. If the restoration of Israel in 1948 is not the fulfillment of Ezekiel 37 and Matthew 24, then the Jews must be exiled from Israel for centuries to return once more to become a nation. This is so unlikely that we can eliminate it as a possibility.”(*Return*, 221).

In *Charting* (p.84) the restoration of Israel in 1948 is called “God’s Super Sign of the End Times,” and they say, “Israel’s re-gathering and the turmoil are specific signs that God’s end-time program is on the verge of springing into full gear. In addition, the fact that all three streams of prophecy (the nations, Israel, and the church) are all converging for the first time in history constitutes a sign in itself.”

LaHaye and Ice query: “What are the signs of the end times? The first sign Jesus pointed to was war. Not just any war, of which the world has seen over 15k to date, but a special war started by two nations and joined by many other nations on either side until all the world is involved. That occurred with the World War I in 1914-1918. Since then there have been a parade of “signs,” the most significant one being the re-gathering of the Jewish people back into the land of Israel and the recognition of Israel as

a nation in 1948.” (*Charting*, 36) On page 119 of the same book, they tell us, “the first and most important sign, the re-gathering of the Jews in Israel after nearly 2000 years of wandering around the world, is so highly significant that we have devoted one whole chart to it.”

Tim LaHaye initially wrote that the generation that saw WWI would be the generation of Christ’s coming, but has now amended (without any indication), that to say that the generation that saw the restoration of Israel in 1948 is the generation to see the end.⁸ Walvoord, (*Israel*, 130) said, “One of the most dramatic evidences that the end of this age is approaching is the fact that Israel has re-established her position as a nation in her ancient land.”

So, the millennialists believe that the generation to see the signs of the end is the generation of the end. They believe that our’s is the generation witnessing the signs, and, the restoration of Israel in 1948 is the greatest sign of all. We need to make an observation right here, before resuming. Our point is germane to the overall point of this article.

THE PASSING OF TIME AND THE FALSIFICATION OF MILLENNIAL ARGUMENTS

In *Prophecy Watch*, Ice and Demy say, “Hal Lindsey, in his landmark book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, taught that Christ would return within a 40 year generation of the re-establishment of Israel. ...Forty years from 1948 is 1988, yet, we are a full decade after this time and the rapture has not occurred.”⁹ In *Charting*, (37), again noting Lindsey’s calculations, they say, “The passing of time, of course, has disproved that idea.”

Simply stated, here was Lindsey’s argument:

The generation to see the “budding of the fig tree” (of Matthew 24:32-33, DKP), would be the generation to see the coming of the Lord.

(Ice and LaHaye might now reject Lindsey’s “fig tree” analysis, but they undoubtedly affirm that the generation to see the signs of the end is the parousia generation, as we have seen).

The budding of the fig tree was the restoration of Israel in 1948.

(While Ice and LaHaye reject the “budding fig tree” analysis, they nonetheless see 1948 as the Super Sign of the End. Therefore, it does not matter whether they accept Lindsey’s fig tree interpretation *per se*, they hold to what he was saying, and that is that 1948 is prophetically foundationally important. As just seen in note #8 LaHaye clearly says that the generation that saw the events of 1948 is the terminal generation. Just exactly how does this differ from Lindsay?

A generation in the Bible is 40 years. (This is Biblically accurate).

Forty years from 1948 is 1988.

Therefore, the Lord must come in 1988.¹⁰

Now, as we have just seen, LaHaye and Ice castigate Lindsey for his now historically falsified prediction. However, notice the *direct corollary* between what Lindsey said and what Ice, LaHaye and others claim.

Major Premise: The generation to see the signs must be the generation of the parousia. (Lindsey, Ice, LaHaye, Jeffrey, Walvoord, et. al. *all* say this).

Minor Premise: But, our generation has and is witnessing the fulfillment of more signs than any generation in history, including the “Super Sign of the End.” (Lindsey, Ice, LaHaye, Jeffrey, Walvoord, et. al, all agree).

Conclusion: Therefore, this generation must be the generation of the parousia.

The question that must be asked is, how important really, is *The Super Sign of the End*? If it is not the critical, indisputable, generational indicator of the soon coming parousia, then just exactly how and why is it so important? Why is it the Super Sign if it is not proof positive that the terminal generation has arrived? Of what is it *The Super Sign*? Remember that Lindsey, Ice, Bock, Jeffrey, LaHaye, et. al. are on record as saying that the generation to see the signs is the parousia generation. Does that not carry extra power and urgency for the generation to see *The Super Sign of the End*? How could anyone argue for the importance of *The Super Sign of the End*, and then turn around and say that *The Super Sign* does not really, *actually* indicate that the end is near after all, but only that the Lord *might* come, that he *could, maybe* come?

Ice and Demy, as well as other millennialists understand that the passing of time has falsified Lindsey’s predictions. The passing of time also falsified the Montanists of the second century, Arethas, Calvin, Martin Luther, and the other prognosticators as well! What does all this have to do with our article?

Take a look again at the three points above, taken directly from the writings of the leading dispensationalists of the day. There is no doubt whatsoever of the importance of 1948 to the millennial paradigm.¹¹ Jeffrey goes so far as to say that it is *inconceivable* that any other, future generation can possibly fit the criteria for fulfillment of prophecies concerning Israel. Ice and LaHaye state repeatedly in their writings that the events of 1948 constitute *The Super Sign of the End,*” and that the generation to see the signs must be the generation of the parousia.¹²

Jesus said, “Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass until all is fulfilled.” This means that his “this generation” would be the one to see the signs and the parousia. It did not mean that some future generation, whenever it might be, would see the signs and then know that they *might* be the terminal generation. “Verily I say unto you,¹³ this generation shall not pass until all these things are fulfilled,” does not mean, “I say to you that the generation to see the signs *might* be the generation when *some of these things* are fulfilled.” He did not say, “When you see these things come to pass then believe in your heart, although you cannot know for sure, that it (the parousia and end of the age, DKP), could be, but not for certain near.” If the signs are present in this generation, *then this must be the generation of the end*. If our generation has seen the fulfillment of a parade of signs, *including the greatest sign of all, then this must be the generation!* What is interesting in all this is that Ice and Demy, and Ice and LaHaye ridicule Hal Lindsay’s false prediction of the Lord’s coming in 1988, noting that the passing of time has proven his argument wrong. Yet, *logically* Ice and LaHaye’s position demands that Christ must come in this generation. The only difference between Lindsey and Ice is that Lindsey had the courage (or naivety), to put his predictions down in black and white terms, while Ice and LaHaye hedge, equivocate and obfuscate. On the one hand they eschew “date setting,” while on the other hand they say that the generation that sees the signs— our generation without fail!— must be the generation.

This is driven home by the emphasis placed on 1948 by not only Lindsey but Ice and LaHaye. Lindsey (correctly) calculated that a generation, Biblically, is 40 years. So, if the restoration of Israel is in fact the Super Sign of the End, and the generation to see the signs, especially the Super Sign, is the terminal generation, *then why was Lindsey wrong?* Ice and LaHaye tells us how critical 1948 was and is in God's schema. Yet, they refuse to have the courage that Lindsey manifested by being consistent with their own calculations! You cannot, *logically* at least, say that 1948 is the *Super Sign of the End*, and say that the generation to see the signs has to be the terminal generation, and then claim that the generation that has seen *the most important sign of all* does not have to be the generation of the end. So, while Ice condemns Lindsay for his predictions, he, Jeffrey, LaHaye Van Impe, et. al. have all done the same identical thing!

Here is the dilemma logically stated:

Major Premise: The generation to see the signs of the end is the generation of the parousia (“These things, when they happen, will not stretch out across generations.”, LaHaye and Ice)

Minor Premise: Our generation is the generation that has and is seeing the signs of the end, including the greatest sign of all, the restoration of Israel in 1948 (LaHaye and Ice).

Conclusion: Therefore, our generation must be the generation of the parousia.

There is no escaping this dilemma. The millennialists have painted themselves into a corner from which there is no escape without now denying:

- 1.) That the generation to see the signs is the generation of the parousia. Yet this is a denial of Jesus' words.
- 2.) That the events of our generation are in truth actual signs of the end. Yet, this would be to reject millennialism itself!
- 3.) That 1948 constitutes the Super Sign of the End. Yet, to deny this is to reject the foundational argument of modern day dispensationalism!

Since his prediction so patently failed, Lindsey, like all failed prophets, went back to the calculator, and declared (falsely) that a Biblical generation is 125 years. Of course, that calculation will allow him to continue to pontificate and prognosticate about the nearness of the end, until he dies, while reaping the financial rewards of the sale of his books. However, when that (*un-Biblical*), 125 years is up, his prediction will fail, and Lindsay will have indeed been proven to be a false prophet. More importantly, the falsity of the entire modern millennial paradigm will have been definitively proven to be false. Indeed, Ice, LaHaye, Van Impe, Jeffrey, Hagee, Hinn, and all of the other so-called prophecy experts of the day, who so stridently point to 1948 as *The Super Sign of the End*, will be demonstrated to have been totally wrong, just as they themselves point to Hal Lindsey and say, “the passing of time has disproved that idea.”

I predict that the passing of this generation that has witnessed the events of 1948 will strip the millennial world of one of, in fact, *the key* “Super Sign” argument, and in the ensuing generations to come, more and more thinking Bible students will look back on the lamentable prognostications of our current generation. The time will come in which the millennialists of the future will no longer be able to point to 1948 as the Super Sign of the End, but will either ignore that event, devalue its sign value, or claim that 1948 was only a precursor to the *real* signs that are yet to come. It is likely that some future generation of millennialists will say something like, “Past generations of Bible students believed

that the restoration of Israel in 1948 was the Super Sign of the End, and demanded that Christ would return in that generation, but the passing of time has shown that to be false.”

On the other hand, we can genuinely hope and pray that the passing of this generation, *and the loss of the 1948 argument*, will signal the ultimate demise of dispensationalism.

¹ Richard Bauckham, *Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 50, Jude and 2 Peter 3* (Waco, Word 1983) 306f, shows how 2 Peter 3 was used by the early church to teach that the earth would stand for 6,000 years and then the millennium. He cites Justin Martyr (*Dialogue*, 81 and other Jewish sources for this.) Likewise, Grant Jeffrey, dispensationalist, in *Triumphant Return, (Ontario, Frontier Research Publications, 2001) 119+*, cites several sources who held to the six days=6,000 years. E.G. Lactantius, (p. 126) said that the world would only continue for 6,000 years and Christ would come at the beginning of the 7th day. Jeffrey (p. 123) also cites the *Epistle of Barnabas*.

² Tim LaHaye and Thomas Ice, *End Times Controversy*, (Eugene, Ore, Harvest House, 2003) 121

³ Ice and LaHaye see the danger in their own statements however, clearly seeing that if they say the generation to see the signs is the terminal generation, and *that our's is the generation seeing the signs*, that our's *must* be the terminal generation. So, they hedge by saying, “We can say that we believe that our generation has more signs to indicate that Christ could come in our lifetime than any generation before us. This does not mean that He will, but it certainly means He *could*.” (Their emphasis, *Charting*, 119) This violates what Jesus said. He did not say, when you see the signs then know that it could be near, or might be near.” He said, “when you see the signs, then know that it is near, even at the door.”

⁴ Interestingly, millennialists freely admit that other generations believed that *their's* was the generation of fulfillment! Jeffrey, *Triumphant*, (203) notes how Martin Luther and others before and after him, taught that all the signs had been fulfilled in his generation and they were expecting the end! So, virtually every generation claims, per Jeffrey, that no other generation has seen the signs it has seen, but, our generation is the one that has really seen the signs, so the end is really near now, though it was not truly near in those other generations!

⁵ John Walvoord, *Israel in Prophecy*, (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1962) 129

⁶ M. R. Dehaan, *The Signs of the Times*, (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1981) 16

⁷ *End Times Controversy*, Thomas Ice and Tim LaHaye editors, (Eugene, Ore, Harvest House, 2003) 167. The chapter in which the quotation is found was, ostensibly at least, written by Ice and not a co-author, so, we feel confident in ascribing it to Ice.

⁸ In the 1973 version of *The Beginning of the End*, (Wheaton, Ill, Tyndale, 1973) 165+. However, in the 1991 reprint of this book LaHaye changed his argument to say of the terminal generation, “It is the generation that sees the events of 1948.”

⁹ Thomas Ice and Timothy Demy, *Prophecy Watch*, (Eugene, Ore, 1998) 73

¹⁰ Thomas Ice and Tim LaHaye, *Charting the End Times*, (Eugene, Ore, Harvest House, Pre-Trib Research Center, 2001) 37, take note of Lindsey's argument saying: “Much confusion has resulted from well-meaning people trying to identify the ‘generation [that] will not pass away until all these

take place' (Matthew 24:34). Some start this generation at verse 31 and believe that its talking about the generation beginning a the time that Israel became a nation in 1948. The passing of time, of course, has disproved that idea." Notice that Ice and LaHaye are essentially making my argument: The passing of time is demonstrating the fallacy of millennial arguments!

¹¹ See my *Israel 1948 Countdown to No Where*, for a comprehensive demonstration that the events of 1948 had nothing to do with the fulfillment of prophecy. Available at Amazon.com or my website: www.eschatology.org.

¹² It is interesting that there is a division between Ice and LaHaye and other millennialists in this regard. In their writings, LaHaye is insistent that the generation to see the signs is the generation of the parousia (see above), and LaHaye insists that since WWI there has been a veritable "parade of signs" in fulfillment of Matthew 24:4f. Ice on the other hand, insists that the signs of Matthew 24 will only begin to be fulfilled after the rapture and that the current events of today, have nothing to do with the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy! On the one hand Ice claims, "The present age is not a time in which Bible prophecy is being fulfilled." (*Prophecy*, 10). Yet, in *Charting* (120) he, along with LaHaye claim that there are *no less than 20 prophetic signs* of the end being fulfilled today!

¹³ The little Greek phrase, "Verily I say unto you" is one of the strongest forms of expression to affirm the validity of what is being said. Jesus was saying in no uncertain terms, that without fail, that the parousia would be in the generation to see the signs, and of course, he was unequivocally saying that was his "this generation." Ice's attempt to distort Matthew 24:36 into saying "The generation that will see all of these things will not pass until all is fulfilled" is a shameful bit of distortion.

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