

## The Tale of Two Jerusalems

### Response to Rebuttal

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*(Disclaimer - This response is slightly longer than my first paper. The reason is that I quote more Scripture. I do not quote all the passages due to space, but exhort and insist that the reader look up the references I make).* In the opening paragraph, note the terms “mystical” and “literal.” By mystical, Warner is being pejorative. What I mean by it is that Jesus was not made of wood when he said, “I am the door.” I “mystically” interpret this to symbolize the *literal* meaning that Jesus is the “way in” to the Father. “Literal” comes from the Latin word meaning, “of the letter.” The Bible uses symbols with *literal* meaning. Paul talks about “spiritual things” (I Co 2.11-16; Ro 15.27, etc) because for him, the things of God are “spiritual,” that is, “of the Spirit.” Jesus powerfully demonstrates this point: “The time is coming and *now has come* when the *true* worshippers will worship the Father...neither on this mountain (Samaria) *nor in Jerusalem*” (Jhn 4.21-24). Tim, however, reverses Jesus’ words to mean this: “The time is coming and now has come when true worshippers, *for right now*, will not worship in Jerusalem, but one day, thousands of years from now, they will for a Millennium worship again in Jerusalem.” Basically, I can sum up his paper in that brief statement.

Does Paul follow Jesus’ framework? Paul said, “first came the natural (*psuchikos*), then the spiritual (*pneumatikos*)” (I Co 15.46). It is clear from this context that Paul envisioned himself already in the “spiritual.” In Tim’s scheme, the natural comes first, then the spiritual, then the natural again! For Paul, Jerusalem is “above” (spiritual) not “below” (earthly, carnal, natural). Tim wrote, “nothing in the context” suggests that the promises made to Israel are fulfilled in the Jerusalem above! He wrote, “Paul was contrasting ORIGINS not DESTINIES” (bold his). Notice he completely omits my argument: “*Cast out the bondwoman and her children*, for they shall NEVER be heirs of the promise” (Ga 4.30). What does “never” mean, Tim? Does that have anything to do with the DESTINY of the bondwoman *and her children*? The “allegory” clearly states that the “bondwoman” is “the present city of Jerusalem” (Ga 4.25). Her “children” are “children according to the *flesh*” (4.23). The whole letter of Galatians is dealing with “have you began in the *Spirit* only to be made perfect by *the flesh*?” (3.3). What does Paul mean here? Who was troubling the Galatians? He tells us. In 2.1-15 it is clear that Paul is speaking of “certain men from Jerusalem” were sent to “spy on our freedom” in the Lord. Which Jerusalem? Jerusalem “below.” Are her children in “bondage to the flesh”? Yes. They believe that circumcision *saves* and marks a person out as a covenant member of God’s family (Acts 15.1-5). But, this Jerusalem *and her children* (Judaizers) shall be “cast out.” Therefore, since they will be cast out and NEVER share in the *promise* (salvation is the promise that comes not by works of the flesh/law, but by faith in Christ), Paul is urging the Gentiles in Galatia to reject their attempts to “convert” them (5.1-13). Paul then *spiritualizes* (sorry Tim) circumcision to mean “life in the Spirit” and “not by hands of men.” He states, “For in Christ neither circumcision nor

uncircumcision has *any value*" (5.6). If circumcision does not have "any value" for those "in Christ" then please explain to me how it will yet again, in Tim's view, have value in the Millennium after Christ comes! Does "never" mean "well, later on the children of the bondwoman *will* inherit the promise"? Deal with Paul's words, Tim. Never means NEVER. Note how Paul concludes the letter: 'Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a *new creation* (Is 65.17; II Co 5.17; Rev 21.1,2). Peace and mercy to *all who follow this rule* namely *the Israel of God*" (6.15.16). Are the "children of the bondwoman" the "children of the promise"? Who is the "Israel of God" that follows the "rule" that circumcision or uncircumcision means nothing? Were the "children of the bondwoman" following this rule? Hardly. They were *enforcing* the exact opposite. They are, then, not the Israel of God. Only those Jews, Gentiles and Diasporic Israelites who followed that rule are the true "Israel of God." It is God that forms Israel, and this is "the new creation" Body of Christ.

For Paul's quote of Isaiah 49.6, Tim insists that Paul saw himself and Barnabas along with those Hebrews that believed as the "preserved" of Israel preaching the "light to the Gentiles." He then relates 49.14 is A.D. 70. Then makes the contradictory claim that the blindness of many Hebrews will one day be removed and Israel "totally restored." But, Paul clearly is not expecting every Israelite to be restored, for even the prophet Isaiah never stated such a thing. "I will not destroy them all. I will bring forth descendents from Jacob" (65.8,9). In Zechariah two thirds of Hebrews are struck down, and only a third "will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, "they are my people," and they will say, "The LORD is our God"" (13.8.9). Paul, rather than looking thousands years down the line, states that God was already showing "mercy" to lost Israel and would continue to save some of them up until the coming of the Lord from Zion, not to Zion (which Tim never dealt with in his paper - Ro 11.25-32). Those whom God continued to save before the destruction of Jerusalem constitutes "all Israel," for Paul is arguing that there is a "remnant" that God is still in process of saving in his generation (11.5). There is no "remnant" of Israel in terms of the old covenant because the old covenant has "vanished," as Tim has admitted, in A.D. 70 (Heb 8.13). If there is no more old covenant, then there cannot be a people so defined. Israel is a "new creation."

Paul quotes 49.8, too, in *II Co* 6.1. Let us hear Paul's commentary on *Isaiah* 49.8: "In the time of my favor ***I will answer you***, and in the day of salvation I will help you.' I tell you now is the time of God's favor, and now is the day of salvation." This is the same "salvation" in 49.6: "I will make you a light to the Gentiles that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the land." 49.11 states, "I will turn my mountains into roads, and my highways will be raised up." Sound familiar? The same language is used for John the Baptizer in *Isaiah* 40.1-5: "In the desert prepare the way of the LORD make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level." The Scriptures confirm that this was John's ministry. Tim, the literalist, would, I suppose, have John literally plowing up highways with a tractor of some sort!

We have already seen that Paul views this as his mission in fulfillment to the prophets. He was fulfilling Scriptures in his Gentile ministry because "now is the time of my favor." *Isaiah* clearly, clearly tells us that the "time of favor" involves the

restoration of the land: “to *restore the land* and reassign its desolate places” (49.8). What Tim does is split verse 8 by thousands of years. Let me illustrate his approach: “In the time of my favor (Paul’s day) I will answer you...[thousands of years gap] to restore the land.” Tim, please explain to me where you get a 2,000 year gap in 49.8. Please explain how Paul can interpret the “time” of God’s favor as in his day (“now”) when Jerusalem was sacked by the Romans? If Paul is saying that “time” of Israel’s “favor” and the “day” of Israel’s “salvation” was in his own generation, and that the “time” and “day” clearly involve the purpose “to restore the land,” then Paul was way, way off if “restore the land” means the literal dirt the Jews called home. But, since it is clear that the “day” and the “time” was in Paul’s day, then only the spiritual Jerusalem “above” can answer as the center of *where* God was going to bring his people. He was bringing them *to Himself through the reconciling work of His Son, Jesus, the Lord, Messiah*. This was the “gathering” of God by the Spirit. 49.13 lets me know that the Comforter (the Spirit) and the “comforting” have come (II Co 1.3-7).

Isaiah has no gap. The gap is invented by Dispensationalists in order to keep their theory afloat. It is passed off to unsuspecting Bible readers as exegesis. But, Paul is clear: “*I tell you NOW is the time of God’s favor.*” That must mean it was the time for God “to restore” the “land” to the true “Israel of God” according to the Spirit, of the promised “seed,” sons of Abraham “by faith” in Christ. Not on “this mountain nor in Jerusalem” but “in Spirit and in Truth.” These are “spiritual things” in which “the natural man” (carnal Israel) could not understand. They basically could not “get” Paul’s message because they were looking for the very same thing Tim is teaching: a literal building on literal dirt, with literal altars and a literal temple in literal Jerusalem and Gentiles literally coming to Jerusalem and being literally circumcised. They were wrong, and so is Tim.

The significance of Jerusalem’s destruction clearly demonstrated to that generation that God’s kingdom was not “meat and drink,” and not “flesh and blood,” but “spiritual” in nature. It is invisible. It is grasped by the eyes of our hearts being “enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, *the glorious inheritance of the saints*” (Eph 1.18). What “inheritance”? Is this the same inheritance Paul mentioned in *Galatians*? You bet! In fact, in this very context he spells it out. Eph 1.12 he mentions the Jews “who were the *first* to believe” and “you Gentiles” who were the “guarantee of *our inheritance*” (1.14). Interestingly, Tim wrote, “The time of her desolation began in A.D. 70 and continues to this day...God has not forgotten her, or the covenant He made with the patriarchs.” Aside from being the world’s longest desolation ever (2,000 years and counting!), Paul contradicts this statement head-on: “For I tell you that Messiah has become a servant to the circumcision (the Jews) on behalf of God’s truth, *to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs*, so that the Gentiles (nations) may glorify God for His mercy, as it is written...” (Ro 15.8-12). Paul quotes *Isaiah* 11.10 in that passage. Now, when would the nations come as a result of God confirming the promises (plural) made to the patriarchs in *Isaiah*? Well, that’s easy to answer: “In the last days the mountain of the Lord’s temple will be established as chief among all mountains and all the nations (Gentiles) will stream to it” (2.1-ff). The Gentiles come in as a result of God confirming his promises! If God has not confirmed the promises to Israel in Jesus, then there cannot be Gentile salvation! When were “the last days”? That’s easy to answer, too: “In

the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets...but in *these last days* he has spoken to us by His son” (Heb1.1,2). If they were in the “last days” of *Isaiah*, then clearly “the mountain of the Lord” should have been “raised” and Gentiles streaming to it. It was: “For you have come to mount Zion, *the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God*” (Heb 12.22). Not “you will come” but “you have come.”

Now, I know that Warner hates all of this “spiritual” language, but the Bible uses it time and time again. He tries to side-step the issue by stating that “heavenly” means glorified dirt. This is one of the strange and insurmountable problems faced by radical literalists like Tim. He wrote, “Abraham lived in the very land that afterward would be the inheritance of his seed *forever*” (ital. mine). Get that, “the land” Abraham walked on would be lived on “forever.” Now, Dispensationalists will turn around and take *II Pe* 3.1-ff as literally referring to the globe. The “elements will melt with fervent heat.” *Revelation* 20.11 says “the earth fled from his presence” and 21.1 states that the “first heaven and first earth had passed away.” Use a little logic here: If the entire “earth” and “land” that Abraham walked on will one day “disappear” and “melt” and “be found no more,” then how in the world can Abraham be an “heir” to *that* land *forever*? That’s a bad real estate deal! “Well, Abraham, it’s yours until I burn it up and melt it like wax.”

Warner quotes *Isaiah* 49.16 which says, “thy walls are ever before me.” These “walls” Tim thinks will be restored in geographical Israel. But, clearly, Paul stated that Jerusalem “above” is “the mother of us all.” This is the vision Moses, David, Ezekiel, and John all saw. John saw a “new Jerusalem” coming down out of heaven. Tim thinks that literally, one day, this huge structure is going to come down and land on the earth, particularly in Israel. Well, how could the writer of *Hebrews* quoted above say to his first century generation that they ‘have come’ to heavenly Jerusalem if it has not ‘come’ to us, yet? How can my “citizenship” be “in heaven” (*Php* 3.20) when I am here on earth? Tim believes that *Ezekiel* 40-48 and the detailed vision in that section has not yet happened until the Millennium, yet, Paul quotes *Ez* 37.27 and states clearly that “you are the temple of God” (*II Co* 6.16). Is Paul spiritualizing again? Can one not see how such spiritualizing would have angered the literalist Jew that insisted on fleshly circumcision and earthly temple ritual? No wonder they wanted Paul dead! He was taking their fleshly desires and spiritualizing them “in Christ.” The temple was no longer “in Jerusalem” below, but in Jerusalem “above.” Circumcision was no longer “according to the flesh” but “according to the Spirit.” Children of Abraham were no longer children by reason of fleshly genealogy, but made children of the promise “by faith.” Imagine that: Gentiles are “children of Abraham” and the real children of Abraham by genealogy were not! For this, Paul was persecuted by the Jews. The only way for the fleshly children of Abraham to come into their promises was to come to Christ and die to the law/old covenant way of life (*Ga* 2.19-21).

The quote from *Ezekiel* above is restated in 43.9, which Tim sees as not yet fulfilled. It is picked up again in *Rev* 21.3. The theme of “God dwelling with his people and I shall be their God” is rooted in the promise made to Abraham (*Gn* 17.7,8). According to Paul in the letter to the Galatians, that was being realized in his own day. God was tabernacling with his people, the Body of Christ, the Temple of God, and he was being revealed as

God to the “nations,” restoring Israel by making the “two one” (*Eph* 2.15,16; *John* 11.52; *Ez* 37.15-28). Jesus/David ruled over this kingdom and delivered it up to the Father spotless and without wrinkle through his cleansing work in the heavenly Temple, the true tabernacle above. The people God had called out, Jews, Gentiles, and Diasporic Israelites (*Jas* 1.1; *I Pe* 1.1,2; *Rev* 7.1-8), were gathered together under the clouds of heaven into the “one new man, Messiah Jesus” according to Paul. They were brought to the holy of holies with Christ, and appeared before the Father in Christ, cleansed, sanctified, and justified by their faith in Christ. *This* is the “better” land that Abraham desired. *This* is the “inheritance of the saints.” Not dirt. Not gold. Not silver, but *God Himself!* Since this has been accomplished in our time, I pray that we see all that God has truly given to us in Christ Jesus.