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FULFILLED!

PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS OF
FULFILLED PROPHECY AND LIFE IN CHRIST

Magazine

*Ponder the path of your feet,
And let all your ways be established.
Do not turn to the right or the left;
Remove your foot from evil.
Proverbs 4:26-27*

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Editor's Update

Hopefully, as you are reading this it is still 2007. That will mean that we actually got four issues out this year! If it's early January, 2008, well . . . we'll just blame it on the holiday mail slowdown.

Over the past several months, many readers have asked if we know of other Preterists in their area. We are careful to not give out any personal information from our mailing list to others. That is why we only use first names or initials in the Mailbag section. However, since many individuals are interested in contacting and/or meeting other Preterists in their area, we are willing to help facilitate those efforts. If you are interested in either contacting other Preterists, or being contacted by other Preterists, let us know. We will compile lists of the names of people so willing, and distribute them. Obviously, it will take us some time and there will be a learning curve on our end (nothing is ever as simple as it seems).

The easiest list to compile and share will be names and email addresses. These can be sent electronically very easily to everyone on the list. For those who do not "do" email, you will have to drop us a line the old-fashioned way. For those on the "email" list, we will simply share a list of names and emails with others. It will then be up to each of you to "reach out and touch someone." Whether you just email others, or meet face-to-face, is up to each individual.

The same is true for those who will be on the "snail mail" (US Postal Service) list. However, for obvious reasons, we will be giving out names and physical mailing addresses. That means that others will know where you live. While we certainly do not expect any untoward activities to be perpetrated against anyone, in this day and age one cannot be too careful. Please understand that we are not providing any type of "screening" service—just because we add a name to a list does not

mean that we are "vouching" for that person. With readers scattered across the country, we are obviously unable to meet everyone. At the risk of sounding overly negative or paranoid, we want the participants to understand that *they* are responsible for using their discretion in determining how much to interact with others, and with whom.

Now, with the negatives behind us, we expect in the months to come to hear of new friendships, Preterist groups and Bible studies springing up, revitalized faith of those who thought they were all alone, and so forth. Just remember that all we will be doing is providing the names and email or mailing addresses of those who so choose. We cannot coordinate any subsequent interaction.



I know how blessed and encouraged my wife and I are to read the letters and emails sent by readers. I'm sure that many of you will find the same as opportunities arise to interact and dialog with others of similar beliefs. Theologically speaking, many of you have been off the beaten path for some time (see article on p.

10). As such, it is always refreshing to find someone who is traveling the same route.

There is much ahead of us to explore. One of the "leaders" in Preterism told me recently that he felt Preterism was still in the "crawling stages." I agree. And being able to compare notes with other "explorers" can help us define our own path. That is why there is such a variety of authors and viewpoints in *FULFILLED!* But, just like the name sharing proposal above, each reader of *FULFILLED!* must exercise their own judgment and compare each viewpoint with Scripture.

Logic dictates that not all views presented here can be 100% correct. However, they can all be wrong! Furthermore, as much as each of us wants to be correct in our theology, we are all wrong! Why? Because we are all fallible beings and therefore cannot be 100% correct in

Cont. next page

Mailbag

I love the Fulfilled Magazine you put out. I have been a preterist for a long time now and it is like music to my ears. Thank you for your effort and dedication to take on something as hard as putting out a magazine. My hat is off to you.

Gene, New Mexico

Thank you for bringing together into one magazine the thoughts about fulfilled prophecy. This understanding of the Bible has increased my faith and joy in our Savior and His Word! May God continue to bless you in this ministry. Sincerely,

Ammon, Pennsylvania

It's very exciting to see more publications and venues for the Good News about the heart of God and our Lord Jesus being made happy because of a greater understanding of the Second Advent in the first century. I have been a Preterist Christian since 2002 and it has drastically altered my life for the better. Be encouraged and rest in Jesus' finished work.

Rich, Pennsylvania

Keep up the good work! I appreciate your acceptance of those whose views differ from yours.

Elene, Texas

Fulfilled Magazine is the best thing that has come in a long time – thanks. I pray that God bless this new, much needed magazine. God bless you,

Laurette, Vermont

You are filling a real need by publishing Fulfilled. The number of authors has to be good for readers new to Preterism. It's not just take it or leave it. There is variety. We pray for the success of your efforts to increase the readership.

George, Pennsylvania

Thank you so much for your article. "Focus on Christ"! That is and always should be our focus. So much of the time we spend our energies on fighting with one another (families do that you know) that we forget that we also major on minors. We all need to step back from our "position" often to pray for one another and to remember the apostle Paul's words, "There is ONE Body and ONE Father and ONE Lord." God bless you for taking that stand. We continually pray for all of you, our brothers and sisters in Christ in the spirit of Romans 1:9.

Denis, Indiana



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Editor's Update (cont.)

our understanding of a God whose judgments are unsearchable and way is unfathomable (Rom 11:33). When I was leading a small-group men's study I would tell the guys that if they agreed completely with me (or their Pastor, favorite author, etc.), then that just meant that we could both be wrong in exactly the same areas! The challenge, however, does not lie in finding where the other guy is wrong—that's the easy way out. The challenge lies in finding where I am wrong!

For Christ's Glory,

Brian



Gleanings from “The Parousia”

This ongoing series of articles is taken from *The Parousia: A Critical Inquiry into the New Testament Doctrine of Our Lord’s Second Coming*, by J. Stuart Russell. Originally published in 1878, Russell used an older style of English and the King James Version of the Bible. We have taken the liberty, when it does no harm to the text, to update the English and use the New King James Version of the Bible. In 1999, *The Parousia* was reprinted with a foreword by R.C. Sproul, in which he stated:

“Few books have forced me to rethink ideas or challenged my assumptions as much as this one has.”

Matt. 19:27-29.

Then Peter answered and said to Him, “See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?” So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.”

Mark 10:28-30.

Then Peter began to say to Him, “See, we have left all and followed You.” So Jesus answered and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life.”

Luke 18:28-30.

Then Peter said, “See, we have left all and followed You.” So He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life.”

To what period are we to assign the event or state here called by our Lord the “regeneration”? It is evidently contemporaneous with “the Son of man sitting on the throne of his glory;” nor can there be any question that the two phrases, “The Son of man coming in his kingdom,” and, “The Son of man sitting on the throne of his glory,” both refer to the same thing, and to the same time. That is to say, it is to the Parousia that both these expressions point.

We have another note of time, and another point of coincidence between the “regeneration” and the Parousia, in the reference made by our Lord to the “coming age or aeon” as the period when His faithful disciples were to receive their recompense (Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30). But the “coming age” was, as we have already seen, to succeed the existing age or aeon, that is to say, the period of the Jewish dispensation, the end of which our Lord declared to be at hand. We conclude, therefore, that the “regeneration,” the “coming age,” and the “Parousia,” are virtually synonymous, or, at all events, contemporaneous. The coming of the Son of

man in His kingdom, or in His glory, is distinctly affirmed to be a coming to judgment—to reward every man according to his works (Matt. 26:27); and His sitting on the throne of His glory, in the regeneration, is as evidently a sitting in judgment. In this judgment the apostles were to

have the honour of being assessors with the Lord, according to His declaration (Luke 22:29, 30)—“And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” But this glorious coming to judgment is expressly affirmed by our Lord to fall within the limits of the generation then living: “there are some standing

here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom” (Matt. 16:28). It was therefore no long-deferred and distant hope which Jesus held out to His disciples. It was not a prospect that is still seen afar off in the dim perspective of an indefinite futurity. St. Peter and his fellow-disciples were fully aware that “the kingdom of heaven” was at hand. They had learned it



by J. Stuart Russell

from their first teacher in the wilderness; they had been reassured of it by their Lord and Master; they had gone through Galilee proclaiming the truth to their countrymen. When the Lord, therefore, promised, that in the coming aeon His apostles should sit upon thrones, is it conceivable that He could mean that ages upon ages, centuries upon centuries, and even millennium upon millennium must slowly roll away before they should reap their promised honours? Are the inheritance of “everlasting life” and the “sitting upon twelve thrones” still among “the things hoped for but not seen” by the disciples? Surely such a hypothesis

refutes itself. The promise would have sounded like mockery to the disciples had they been told that the performance would be so long delayed. On the other hand, if we conceive of the “regeneration” as contemporaneous with the Parousia, and the Parousia, with the close of the Jewish age and the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, we have a definite point of time, not far distant, but almost within the sight of living men, when the predicted judgment of the enemies of Christ, and the glorious recompense of His friends, would come to pass. X

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Ἰτ'ς Ἀλλ Γρεεκ το Με!

*And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in **all the world** as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.* (Matt 24:14 NKJV)

We are often told that the gospel has not yet been preached in all the world, therefore “the end” has not yet arrived. A closer look at the Greek word translated “world” above reveals a different perspective:

NT:3625

oikoumene (oy-kou-men'-ay); feminine participle present passive of NT:3611 (as noun, by implication of NT:1093); land, i.e. the (terrene part of the) globe; specifically, the Roman empire.

The “world” of first-century Christianity was the world of the Roman Empire. This is illustrated by the following translations of Luke 2:1:

And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. (NKJV)

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (NIV)

The world that was required to be registered in the days of Caesar Augustus was the same world that was to have the gospel preached to it. Paul confirms that this indeed was accomplished:

. . . the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven . . . (Col 1:23 NKJV)

Scripture affirms that the gospel was preached in all the world during the first century, just as Jesus prophesied. So . . . did the end come?



CREATION TO CO

Studies in Reder

The World God Created

By Ed Stevens

In our last two articles, we surveyed the big picture of redemption by studying the Scriptures which affirm that God planned redemption before He created the universe. This lesson builds on that redemptive theme by looking at the world God created and attempting to discover the identity of the world with which Genesis 1-3 deals, as well as the nature of that world before the fall of Adam into sin.

This is important to study because there are some within the Preterist movement who suggest that the creation account of Genesis is nothing more than an allegorical description of Israel's covenantal "world" created during its exodus out of Egypt. This concept of covenantal "creation" is then used to build a "collective body" model of redemption and resurrection. Fortunately, very few advocates of a "collective body" resurrection view take this approach to Genesis. Thus, our focus here is not on those who hold a "collective body" resurrection view, but rather on those who deny a literal, historical Genesis account of creation, either because of an allegorical or an evolutionary approach. As such, I will be following a more traditional approach, which views Genesis as affirming the creation of the visible, physical realm (the earth) and all it contains, including plants and animals, the first two humans (Adam and Eve), and an actual physical Garden in which they were to dwell.

This does not mean, of course, that the original, physical creation cannot be used as types for eschatological antitypes, for the physical creation has been applied typologically in the New Testament (e.g., 1 Cor 15). Instead, what I am affirming is that any typological use of Genesis in the New Testament presupposes a real, historical creation of the physical earth, including Adam and Eve as the first two created (not evolved) human beings, a real Garden of Eden, a real Tree of Knowledge and Tree of Life, and a real, historical appearance of Satan in the form of a serpent to deceive Eve.

The main problem with both the allegorical and

evolutionary approaches to Genesis is that they attack the credibility of Jesus and the New Testament writers who clearly interpreted Genesis literally and historically. So let's look at some New Testament teaching about the world that God created:

Colossians 1:16-17 - Jesus never gives the slightest credence to evolution or long ages (both of which were taught by Greek philosophers at that time). Jesus was certainly in a position to know how the universe came to be since Colossians 1:16-17 says He existed before all things and created all things.

Mark 13:19 - Jesus taught that the universe was created by God, not the product of blind chance or natural processes ("the creation which God created").

Matthew 24:21 - Jesus believed the world had a beginning ("since the beginning of the world"), rather than always existing and finally evolving into what we see today.

Matthew 19:4-6 - Jesus quotes from both Genesis 1:27 and 2:24, showing that Jesus believed the "male and female" created on the sixth day (in Gen 1:27) to be none other than Adam and Eve (mentioned in Gen 2). Jesus also states (v. 6) that marriage between the very first "male and female" was instituted at the very beginning of creation, a marriage identified by His quote of Genesis 2:24 to be that of Adam and Eve. Jesus takes the account of Adam and Eve literally and historically and bases the sanctity of marriage ("let not man put asunder") upon that first union which God arranged ("what He has joined").

Mark 10:6 - Here Jesus teaches that Adam and Eve were created at "the beginning of the creation" (at the beginning of the world, not the beginning of the human race), right after everything else had just been created—not millions of years later after everything else had long been in existence! (See also Mark 13:19.)

1 Timothy 2:13-14 - Both Adam and Eve are mentioned as historical persons. Paul says Adam was created



CONSUMMATION

Redemptive History



first, implying his acceptance of Genesis' account of Eve's creation from Adam's rib as historical fact. Then he mentions the deception of Eve and her fall into transgression. Mentioning the serpent's deception of Eve in 2 Corinthians 11:3, Paul must have considered Genesis 1-3 to be historical narrative, not allegorical or mythological.

1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45 - Sin and death came through one man (Adam). Paul accepts as historical the Genesis account of the fall of Adam into sin, which brought some kind of death to him and all of his descendants. It also proves that Adam was the first man, since it was through him that death spread to all mankind afterwards. Adam cannot be allegorical with no basis in history, otherwise the antitype (Christ) would have no historical precedence. The typology (Adam the type and Christ the antitype) presupposes a literal, historical Adam who fell into sin and brought his whole family of descendants under condemnation, so that they needed the Last Adam to bring redemption (cf. Rom 5:12-15).

Conclusion

If we removed Genesis (which depicts Creation, the Fall, the Flood, the genealogies, the Tower of Babel, the Table of Nations, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph) from our Bibles and considered it as either unreliable mythology or unhistorical allegory, it would destroy the foundation for the rest of the Bible, making it unintelligible and inapplicable. The New Testament bases its moral, ethical, and redemptive teaching directly

on the people and events mentioned in Genesis. The whole focus of the New Testament is on Christ's sacrifice to cover the sinfulness of mankind which was introduced by Adam and Eve. If Adam and Eve never existed, then mankind never fell into sin, rendering meaningless Christ's death and the plan of redemption. This would remove the essential historical fabric of the Bible through which the moral, ethical, and redemptive content is interwoven. Marriage and family—the most fundamental institutions of mankind—are based directly on literal, historical people, as well as the events mentioned in the first three chapters of Genesis.

In view of the above New Testament affirmations of the historicity of the Genesis account of Creation, all conservative Christians should back away from any view of Genesis which teaches that it is nothing more than mythology, or an allegory using fictitious names of people who never really existed to represent the creation of the nation of Israel.

Genesis is an account of God creating the visible universe and all that it contains, including: the earth with all its plants and animals; and the first two humans—Adam and Eve; and an actual, physical Garden in which they were to dwell. This is the kind of world that God created. It would discredit both Christ and His apostles to teach otherwise, since it is clear from their teaching that they took Genesis literally.

As we go further in our studies of redemption, we will notice how a literal interpretation of Genesis, along with the appropriate applications of typology, will solve all of the difficult eschatological problems which are encountered at the other end of the Bible (i.e., the book of Revelation). Stay tuned. ✕



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Objection: Several Old Testament prophets claimed that the “Day of the Lord” was “near, at hand, etc.,” in their day (e.g., Ezekiel 30:3; Joel 1:15, 3:14; Obadiah 14), and yet the Second Coming was further away from them than for the New Testament apostles. Why, then, must we take New Testament usages of terms like “at hand, near, shortly, etc.,” at face-value, but not these Old Testament passages?

Response: On the surface, this sounds like a solid objection to Covenant Eschatology. However, when we actually look at Scripture, we soon realize that the objection is based on some false assumptions. Furthermore, it overlooks the emphatic words of Scripture!

The first assumption is that “the Day of the Lord” is always referent to the “Second Coming.”

Secondly, it is also assumed that the Day of the Lord must be a literal, visible, bodily coming of the Lord.

Thirdly, this objection overlooks the fact that the Old Testament itself draws a distinction between “Days of the Lord” that were imminent, and *the* Day of the Lord that was not near!

The Old Covenant did predict the “Day of the Lord.” However, what is not proven by the objection is that the “Day” being predicted was to be a bodily, visible appearance of the Lord, or, that it is the Day of the Lord predicted in the New Testament! In fact, it is not! Let’s consider a specific text.

Isaiah 34 is one of the most graphic descriptions of the Day of the Lord in the Old Testament. Taken literally, it would describe the dissolution of the cosmos. However, take note of several facts:

- 1.) The prediction was against Edom (v. 8f), and the nations.
- 2.) It was the “Day of the Lord.”
- 3.) The dust of the earth, even the streams would be turned to pitch and burn day and night forever and ever (v. 9f).
- 4.) The wild animals would dwell there, and the weeds would take over!

One has to wonder how the earth could burn perpetually, while animals and weeds would take over! Are we to believe in asbestos animals?

When we examine Isaiah 34 in light of other prophecies concerning Edom and the progression of history, certain things become apparent:

- 1.) The destruction of Edom was to occur at the same time as the destruction of the other nations (Jeremiah 25; Ezekiel 25).
- 2.) The destruction of Edom was to occur *at the hands of the Babylonians* (Jeremiah 25:9ff)—when the Lord would roar from heaven (Jeremiah 25:30f).
- 3.) The Day of the Lord was *not* near in Isaiah, but, it was near when Obadiah wrote (Obadiah 15f).

4.) The prophet Malachi looked back on the destruction of Edom as a fulfilled reality, and even used the language of Isaiah 34 to describe that destruction (Malachi 1:2f)!

5.) The Babylonians, in 583 BC, destroyed Edom just as predicted!¹

So, Edom was to be destroyed in the “Day of the Lord.” That Day was near when Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Obadiah wrote, and *Malachi wrote Edom had been destroyed!* Prophecy fulfilled! Yet, patently, YHVH did not come out of heaven, the cosmos was not melted, the earth did not catch on fire, nor is it still burning.

If we are to be good students of the Bible, we must honor its use of different genres of literature, including apocalyptic, metaphoric language! What right do we today have to deny the biblical writers the right to write metaphorically?

The objection above offers Joel as proof that the Old Testament writers predicted the Day of the Lord to occur imminently. What is missed in Joel is the reality that Joel predicted *two* Days of the Lord! In Joel 1:1-2:27, Joel addresses the Day that was near. However, in v. 28, he writes, “It shall come to pass *afterward*.” After what? *After the Day that was near!*

Notice also that in 3:1 he writes, “It shall come to pass *in those days*, and *at that time*. . . .” He is addressing now the “afterward” Day, the Day that would come *in the last days*. I refer to this as “projected imminence.”

A common feature in the Old Testament, “projected imminence” is when the writer refers to events that are far off from his perspective, but says that the predicted events will be near *when the anticipated time arrives*. For example, consider Deuteronomy 4:25f: “*When you have dwelt in the land a long time . . . and you sin . . . then you will perish quickly.*” The prophecy projects forward to the time of the New Jerusalem, of which Isaiah 60:22 says, “I the Lord will hasten it in its time.” Note the statement that *in its time*, the Lord would hasten it! Thus, just like Joel, *when the last days arrived*, the Day of the Lord would be near!

This contrast between a near Day of the Lord, along with the projection into the last days, when the future Day of the Lord would be near, forces us to realize several things:

- 1.) The “Day of the Lord” language of the Old Testament was being used metaphorically, since the near Days were fulfilled.
- 2.) The time statements of imminence, in other words, were objective.
- 3.) The Old Testament authors were an-

OBJECTION OVERRIDDEN

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eschatology
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OBJECTION: OVERRULED!



icipating another, consummative Day, which they emphatically say

was *not* near in their time!

Significantly, the New Testament writers *never* project imminence! Instead, they always wrote that *they were living in the last days foretold by the Old Testament prophets* (cf. Matthew 13:17; Acts 3:21-24; Hebrews 1:1f; 2 Peter 3:1-2). This is critical!

Furthermore, both the Old and New Testaments teach that the Second Coming would be of the same *nature* as the Old Testament “Days of the Lord.”² For brevity, let me make this argument:

Major Premise: The coming of Christ to establish the New Heaven and Earth was the Day foretold by Isaiah 64-66 (2 Peter 3:1-2, 13).

Minor Premise: The coming of Christ foretold by Isaiah 64-66 was to be a Day of the Lord like *previous* Days of the Lord—a non-literal, non-visible, historical Day of the Lord (Isaiah 64:1-3).

Conclusion: The Coming of Christ of 2 Peter 3 was to be a non-literal, non-visible, historical Day of the Lord.

Let me establish the minor premise: “*Oh, that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down! That the mountains might shake at Your presence As fire burns brushwood, As fire causes water to boil—To make Your name known to Your adversaries, That the nations may tremble at Your presence! When You did awesome things for which we did not look, You came down, The mountains shook at Your presence.*” (Isaiah 64:1-3)

Isaiah prayed for YHVH to come, to destroy creation! He wanted the Lord to come and manifest Himself to the nations. Take particular note: he wanted YHVH to come *as He had come in the past*: “When you did things for which we did not look, *You came down!*” Did you catch that?

Patently, YHVH had never come out of heaven literally, visibly, bodily! He had never descended and destroyed Creation before! Yet, the prophet said He had! This is undeniably metaphorical, hyperbolic language to describe God’s intervention in history. Thus, the Old Testament describes and defines the Second Coming as a Day like past “Days of the Lord.”

But, to drive the point home, the New Testament writers tell us, emphatically, that the Old Testament writers *did not*, as the objection claims, say that Christ’s consummative parousia was near! Consider 1 Peter 1:10-12, “*Of this salvation [Salvation at Christ’s parousia, v. 5-9, DKP], the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the*

grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.”

Notice that the Old Testament prophets foretold the coming of Messiah for eternal salvation. But, those Old Testament prophets were told that Messiah’s salvation coming *was not for their day!* Please see Daniel 12:1-13 where Daniel foresaw the time of the resurrection. Furthermore, he was told that the end time events were not for his day! This is precisely Peter’s point!

Summary: The Old Testament writers did say the Day of the Lord was near. And, what they predicted as near truly was near! The nearness language was objective, true, and fulfilled!

The descriptive language of the Day of the Lord was not fulfilled literally, but metaphorically, as God sovereignly intervened in history.

However, the Old Testament prophets did not say that Christ’s consummative Parousia was near. The consummative Day of the Lord (Christ’s Second Coming) was to be of the same nature as the previous Days of the Lord.

The New Testament writers affirmed in the clearest of language that the last days Parousia foretold by the Old Testament prophets had now, in the first century, drawn near. Thus, the objection has been demonstrated to be based on false assumptions, and makes false claims. The objection has been overruled! ⚖️



1. *New International Standard Bible Encyclopedia Revised*, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmann, 1988) *idem* Edom.

2. For a full discussion of this vital point, see my *Like Father Like Son, On Clouds of Glory*. (available at Amazon or my website). Jesus said he was going to come “in the glory of the Father” (Matthew 16:27), which means he was going to come as the Father had come! YHVH had never come literally, visibly, bodily!

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of Scripture that have been fulfilled in every detail.” (Gary DeMar, *Last Days Madness*, p. 35)

Off the Beaten Path

Have you ever had to walk any distance through a thick layer of new snow? Compacting the snow beneath your feet each and every step you take makes for slow going. However, for someone following in your footsteps the journey is both easier and quicker.

The same holds true in forging a new trail during a wilderness hike. From a distance, or perhaps from a map, you determine what looks to be the best route to your destination. However, once on your way you may encounter obstacles and terrain which necessitate modifications and detours from your original plan. Each hill that is crested; each bend that is rounded presents a fresh perspective on your journey. What appeared to be the shortest route from a distance is revealed up close to be impassable due to steep terrain. From the crest of a hill you see that the backside is covered so thickly with brush that it is better to back-track and circumnavigate the entire area.

By noting all these details, and sharing the information with others, their journey becomes easier and quicker. They might even enhance the trail further; finding a shortcut here and there, clearing overgrown brush, etc.

Similar principles apply in our own journeys toward the truth of God's Word. The pioneering work of those who have gone before us makes our journey both easier and quicker. Not easy and quick—*easier* and *quicker*. I cannot imagine the painstaking hours of work by individuals such as Strong and Young to record every occurrence of every word in the Bible. The resulting exhaustive concordances which resulted from their pioneering efforts have made our journeys toward knowing and understanding the Bible both easier and quicker. The same can be said of lexicons, Greek and Hebrew dictionaries, commentaries and so forth. Imagine how slow our "journey" would be if these scholars had not gone before us, helping to blaze and define the trail!

Regardless of how improved the trail is, and how many others have traveled it before us, there is one thing that is required, and can only be accomplished, by us individually—*make the journey!* Even if the trail is paved with asphalt and there are elevators at all of the steep sections, if we never leave base camp we will never reach the destination. We may have in our possession detailed maps and step-by-step de-

scriptions of the journey, but until we make the journey for ourselves those details and descriptions are someone else's—not ours.

Similarly, regardless of what wonderful Bible study aids are at our disposal, it is incumbent upon each of us to make our own journey toward the truth of God's Word. Unfortunately, many in the Church today possess detailed "maps" and "descriptions" of theology which are not their own, but someone else's. This is especially true in the area of eschatology. Many feel that the journey is just too confusing, and rather than attempting it they are content merely to possess the eschatology of someone else. They have read a book, watched a video or heard a sermon which presented a plausible

"map" and "description" of the eschatological journey, and have adopted them as their own. Without doubt the books, videos, and sermons of others can be very helpful in our journeys, but only if scrutinized by the light of the one and only source of biblical truth—the Bible itself.

Unfortunately, many who *are* willing to accept the journey often find themselves on a different trail than the majority. Why? Because, as they compare the "maps" and "descriptions" provided to them with the instructions of the Bible, they discover that there are discrepancies. Although there is a very real and well-defined trail to that peak over yonder, is that peak the one the Bible intends? Many Preterists, feeling that something was amiss, put aside the "maps" and "descriptions" of the popular trail, and began

bushwhacking in the direction they felt the Bible was indicating. The result was a separate peak, which they feel better fits the biblical description of "Mt. Eschatology." Over the years, remnants of an overgrown trail were discovered and the pathway was cleared and better defined. It is not paved, not by any stretch of the imagination, but there is a pathway.

One of the results of standing on this "new" peak is that one views the mountain range of theology from a different perspective. Standing on this peak, instead of that one over there, "Mt. Millennium" takes on a different shape; as does "Resurrection Valley" and "Judgment Gorge." This realization is both exhilarating and unsettling at the same time. Exhilarating because new possibilities are at once opened to



view. Whereas before, when standing on the other peak, you could never quite understand how one got from “Pt. D” to “Pt. E,” from this new angle a whole new approach seems possible. On the other hand, you are unsettled because you realize that if the path from “Pt. D” to “Pt. E” is not what you had been previously taught, then perhaps your understanding of the path from “Pt. A” to “Pt. B” is not what you think it is! Obviously, your journey has only begun, and there are many more trails to explore. And that will take time and effort!

Herein resides one of the more puzzling and discouraging aspects of Preterism, in my opinion. Many Preterists seem to have forgotten their internal agony as they were led to question the validity of the “popular trail,” as well as their years of study, struggling on a trail leading away from the majority. This same agony and struggle is repeated for the judgment, the resurrection, the millennium, and a host of other doctrines. Yet some, who have years, or decades, start on others, seem to have forgotten that, regardless of how well-traveled and well-defined the paths become, we each have to make our individual journey. I cannot see the millennium, rapture, judgment, resurrection, etc., from your view until *I* make that journey. Yes, because you and others have made the journey, my journey is easier and quicker. It may take a group of individuals

several months to develop a 10-mile hiking path. When they are done it won’t take me months to hike it. However, even though it has been cleared and rock steps put in place, *I still have to hike ten miles*. Some are faster hikers than others; some have more time to hike than others. Furthermore, if it is to be truly *my* journey, I must judge each path not by those who have gone before me, but by the Word of God. Otherwise I am merely adopting their journey as my own. And if I were the type to do that, I would still be on the popular path. I don’t mean to minimize or deny the efforts, insights, and knowledge of other Preterists. But frankly, if I were to stop thinking for myself and accept a “canned” eschatology, it wouldn’t be Preterism, for the simple fact that my previous Futurist existence was a much better “package deal.” It included fellowship, Bible studies, church activities, etc. And that will be the case until we Preterists allow each other the time necessary to explore the trails before us, and the grace to be at different places in the journey.

In the pages of *FULFILLED!* you will find perspectives from many different trails, and many places on the trails. Just because they are printed here does not make them *the* truth. Don’t make them *your* truth until you have proven them by the Word of God. ✕

*But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near.
Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains . . . (Luke 21:20-21 NKJV)*

And now the seditious, insomuch that many of them ran out of the city, as though it were to be taken immediately; but the people upon this took courage, and where the wicked part of the city gave ground, thither did they come, in order to set open the gates, and to admit Cestius as their benefactor, who, **had he but continued the siege a little longer, had certainly taken the city**; but it was, I suppose, owing to the aversion God had already at the city and the sanctuary, that he was hindered from putting **an end to the war that very day**. It then happened that Cestius was not conscious either how the besieged despaired of success, nor how courageous the people were for him; and so he recalled his soldiers from the place, and by despairing of any expectation of taking it, without having received any disgrace, **he retired from the city, without any reason in the world.** (*Wars*, 2.19—emphasis added)

William Whiston, the translator of Josephus’ works above, makes the following observation concerning this strange behavior of Cestius:

There may another very important, and very providential, reason be here assigned for this strange and foolish retreat of Cestius; which, if Josephus had been now a Christian, he might probably have taken notice of also; and that is, the affording the Jewish Christians in the city an opportunity of calling to mind the prediction and caution given them by Christ about thirty-three years and a half before, that “when they should see the abomination of desolation” [the idolatrous Roman armies, with the images of their idols in their ensigns, ready to lay Jerusalem desolate,] “stand where it ought not;” or “in the holy place;” or, “when they should see Jerusalem encompassed with armies,” they should then “flee to the mountains.” By complying with which those Jewish Christians fled to the mountains of Perea, and escaped this destruction. Nor was there, perhaps, any one instance of a more unpolitic, but more providential conduct than this retreat of Cestius, visible during this whole siege of Jerusalem; which yet was providentially such a “great tribulation, as had not been from the beginning of the world to that time; no, nor ever should be.” (*Wars*, 2.19—footnote—brackets in original)



David Curtis

First, I ask, “Who is Jesus?” This cannot be answered without going to the Word of God. Then, as we study God’s Word, we see that Jesus said:

I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me (John 14:6 NASB).

Jesus is the Truth. This is also said of God’s Word:

Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth (John 17:17 NASB).

So both Jesus and God’s Word are the Truth. So you would have to say that “Truth matters!” And if Truth matters, then what Jesus said about eschatology matters—wouldn’t you say? Well, here is what Jesus said:

For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and WILL THEN RECOMPENSE EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS. Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom (Matt 16:27-28 NASB).

Clearly, verse 27 speaks of the Second Coming; He comes with the angels to reward every man. Compare this with the following:

Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is

with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done (Rev 22:12 NASB).

This passage is recognized as describing the Second Coming. But note that it parallels Christ’s words to His disciples in Matthew 16:27. So in Matthew 16:27 Christ is speaking to His disciples of His Second Coming. Now look at the next verse:

Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom (Matt 16:28 NASB).

Who are the “YOU” of this verse? Verse 24 tells us that Jesus is speaking to his disciples. So Jesus is saying to His disciples, who were standing there, that some of them would still be alive when He returned in the Second Coming.

Some say that Jesus is referring to the transfiguration of Matthew 17:2, but that was only six days later, and none of them had died in that six day period! Did He come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and reward each man according to his works at the transfiguration? Of course not! How about at Pentecost? No, that was only two months later and, with the exception of Judas, they were all still alive.

What are the possible explanations for this verse? I see only three (if you have others I would like to hear them): (1.) Some of the disciples are still alive today.

When sharing Preterism how do you respond to those who downplay eschatology? “I just want to follow Jesus.”

John Noë



Given the current state of confusion and complexity of eschatological views, it is no wonder that many Christians feel that their view or non-view of the fulfillment of end-time Bible prophecy is not important. Instead of facing and admitting this deficiency, some, often unabashedly, profess an emotional response, such as, “I just want to follow Jesus.” This form of knowledge avoidance has also been termed pan-millennialism (“It’ll all pan out in the end”) and pro-millennialism (“However it pans out, I’m for it”). It is a “Jesus-loves-me-this-I-know-and-that’s-all-I-want-to-know” intellectual copout.

The seeds of anti-intellectualism date back to the Second Great Awakening of the early 19th century, when a wave of evangelical revivalism and emotionalism swept the country. One fallout of this

trend is that many Christians today see eschatology as an appendix to the Christian faith and, therefore, not significant in their daily lives. Moreover, they reason, if it is a “non-essential” for salvation and if even the experts cannot agree, why should I bother trying to figure it out?

In numerous speaking engagements, small-group and one-on-one discussions, and several written opportunities, I have chosen to address intellectually this all-too-common tendency head-on. At different times and places (to differing degrees of breadth and depth depending upon my audience and their responsiveness), I have elaborated on seven key reasons why one’s eschatological view or non-view is so important. Not coincidentally, these are also major areas where modern Christianity has greatly “dumbed down” the Church’s understanding of Scripture.¹

I met a Marine Corp Major who visited our church that actually holds this view; (2.) Jesus was confused or lying. I hope I could not convince any of you of this one; (3.) Hang on! Jesus actually did what He said and came in the lifetime of His disciples. I would like to convince you all of this one. This seems like the simple and clear answer that holds to the inspiration of Scripture. Jesus did what He said He would do. If you don't think that Jesus came when He said He would then we have a problem—a big problem:

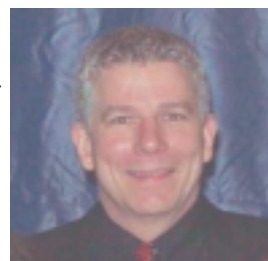
I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him. But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. And you may say in your heart, "How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?" When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him. (Deut 18:18-22 NASB)

preterism with others,
and to Christians
eschatology saying,
follow Jesus"?

Most Christians would say that the Lord has not yet returned, making Jesus a false prophet. Jesus spoke to His disciples say-

ing that some of them would still be alive when He returned in the Second Coming. Was Jesus wrong? If He was, then, according to Deuteronomy 18, He was a false prophet. If Jesus was a false prophet, then we are all dead in our sins and under the wrath of God. If God does not keep the WHEN part of his promises, He has not kept His promise! The inspiration of the Scriptures demands complete fulfillment of every aspect of God's promises. But if Jesus is Lord, then what He said was true—He returned in the Second Coming before all of his disciples had died.

If you want to follow Jesus, you need to know what He said, which includes what He said about eschatology, and you need to believe Him. How can you follow Jesus if you don't believe Jesus? X



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Perspectives

How much of the New Testament is involved? According to R. C. Sproul, "It has been argued that no less than two thirds of the content of the New Testament is concerned directly or indirectly with eschatology."² Some experts have estimated that 25 to 30 percent of the whole Bible is so concerned. Therefore, we are not dealing with a fringe issue. As Brian Daley understands it, there is "an eschatological dimension to every aspect of Christian faith and reflection . . . because it touches so many of the central themes of faith."³ Your view or non-view of eschatology affects dramatically your understanding, misunderstanding, or lack of understanding of many other important aspects of the Christian faith. For instance, it greatly impacts points 2 through 7 below.

How much salvation do we currently have?

The whole of the Bible is concerned with man's problem (sin) and God's solution (salvation/redemption). The final outworking of that redemptive solution for those alive, as well as those dead, is what salvation and eschatology are both all about. Depending upon your eschatological view, your answer to this question will vary from "some" to "most" to "all."

How much of the kingdom do we currently possess?

The teaching of the kingdom of God was the central teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. Sadly, it is no longer the central teaching of most of His church. The most popular view claims Christ's kingdom was postponed by God when Jesus was rejected

Noë (from p. 13)

and crucified. Having been withdrawn temporarily, it will someday be set up in Jerusalem when Christ returns. Another view states that it is only here “in some sense,” but this view cannot define in what sense. A third view assures us that, while it is mostly here and is each individual’s responsibility to advance it, it will come fully and catastrophically sometime in the future at Christ’s return. A fourth view professes a consummated and present kingdom, here and now, but says little about it and/or claims that major components of the kingdom have ceased to function. Clearly, the kingdom of God is caught in eschatological mid-air. Consequently, it is almost impossible for someone today to follow Jesus’ basic admonition to “seek ye first the kingdom of God” (Matt 6:33 KJV). So, your answer to this question will also vary, depending on your view, from “none” to “some” to “most” to “all but minus some things.”

What do you do with the modern-day nation of Israel? No more volatile or politically charged issue has exploded onto the front page of the world scene and into the church than that of the contemporary role (or non-role) of the modern-day nation of Israel in fulfillment of end-time Bible prophecy. Many believe that if we don’t support Israel, we’ll be biblically cursed, individually and nationally. Others believe that biblical Israel has been replaced by the church. Most simply don’t know what to think, believe, or do about it.

It’s the focal point of the liberal-skeptic attack on the Bible. Again, R. C. Sproul says it well: “In seminary I was exposed daily to critical theories espoused by my professors regarding the Scriptures. What stands out in my memory of those days is the heavy emphasis on biblical texts regarding the return of Christ, which were constantly cited as examples of errors in the New Testament and proof that the text had been edited to accommodate the crisis in the early church caused by the so-called parousia-delay of Jesus.”⁴ This perceived weakness was, and still is, the crack that let the liberals in the door to begin their systematic criticism and dismantling of Scripture with its inevitable bankrupting of the faith. Consequently, in America over the past 50 to 100 years, seminary after seminary, denomination after denomination, church after church, and believer after believer have departed from the conser-

vative faith. Critics have hit Christianity at its weakest point—the embarrassing statements of Jesus to the effect that He would return within the lifetime of His contemporaries and the “failed” Holy-Spirit-guided expectations of the New Testament writers that He would (John 16:13).

It makes a difference in your worldview. Our forefathers in the faith came to this country under a particular, optimistic eschatological view to expand the kingdom of God. They believed that the world would become a better and better place as it became more Christianized, and that each Christian was responsible to do his or her part. Hence, they came and founded the great institutions of our country—our government, public schools, and universities—under Judeo-Christian principles, making Christianity *the* moral influencer in our society. However, 50 to 75 years ago, all this began to change. Now, we’ve almost given it all away without a fight. Ironically, we didn’t get pushed out by a more powerful force. We simply withdrew. Into the vacuum gladly came the ungodly forces. Why did this happen? A prime reason is that the dominant eschatological view here in America changed from one of optimism to one of historical pessimism, supported by the erroneous belief that the world is supposed to get worse and worse before Christ returns. And as Edmund Burke, the 18th century British statesman, once wrote, “The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.” Eschatological ideas have consequences.

It makes a difference in your life and family. If you have bought into the popular concepts that Christ will soon return and the world is going to end, these beliefs affect how you and your family think, pray, work, save, plan, invest, and commit or don’t commit to do things in the present—especially things that have long-term payouts. As someone once put it, “Your view of the future affects your philosophy of life.” It has also been well noted, “If there’s no faith in the future, there is no power in the present.” Again, eschatological ideas have consequences—very important consequences.

Whether or not we are willing to admit it, we all have certain eschatological ideas. And as can be clearly seen from the above, those ideas affect greatly how we “follow Jesus.” X

1. For more, see author's recently published article in *MovieGuide* magazine (Sept. 2007 issue) titled, "Why Are Christians Losing America?" (www.movieguide.org – click "Articles / Show All / Sep 14th, 2007").

2. R. C. Sproul, "A Journey Back in Time," *Tabletalk*, January 1999, 5.

3. Brian E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 2.

4. R. C. Sproul, *The Last Days According to Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 14-15.

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FULFILLED MAGAZINE

Prophecy Quiz

True or False: The following passage is describing the Second Coming of Christ:

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. (Rev 19:11-16)

Most people would answer that the above passage is indeed a picture of Christ's glorious Second Coming. However, many of these same individuals believe that His Second Coming will be both bodily and visible because of the words of the angel in Acts 1:11:

"Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

If Jesus is to return in the same manner He was taken up, why was there no white horse in the ascension? Where was the robe dipped in blood? Where were the heavenly armies following on white horses? We cannot deny these discrepancies between the ascension and Second Coming accounts above. Perhaps we have misapplied the term "in like manner." Instead of applying the words to how Christ ascended into the air (sky), what if we apply them to how He ascended from the air into heaven (the spiritual dimension)? In what "manner" did that occur? "A cloud received Him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). He left in the clouds and He would return in the clouds (Rev 1:7). The Old Testament describes several "cloud-comings" of God—and yet God was never seen physically (Isa 19:1; Joel 2:1-2; Nah 1:2-3). In light of this Old Testament precedent, how would the New Testament generation have understood Christ's "coming on the clouds"?

Preterism . . . *it's about time!*

It's about the time Jesus told His disciples that He would return—*this (His) generation!*

It's about the time the New Testament authors told their readers Jesus would return—*soon, near, at hand, shortly!*

It's about time for a Scriptural explanation other than delay!

It's about time for a "last days" view that doesn't conjure up gaps and parenthetical ages!



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Preterism . . . *maybe it's about time you looked into it!*