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# FULFILLED!

*Magazine*

PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS OF  
FULFILLED PROPHECY AND LIFE IN CHRIST

In the beginning  
God created . . .

An introduction to  
Covenant Creation





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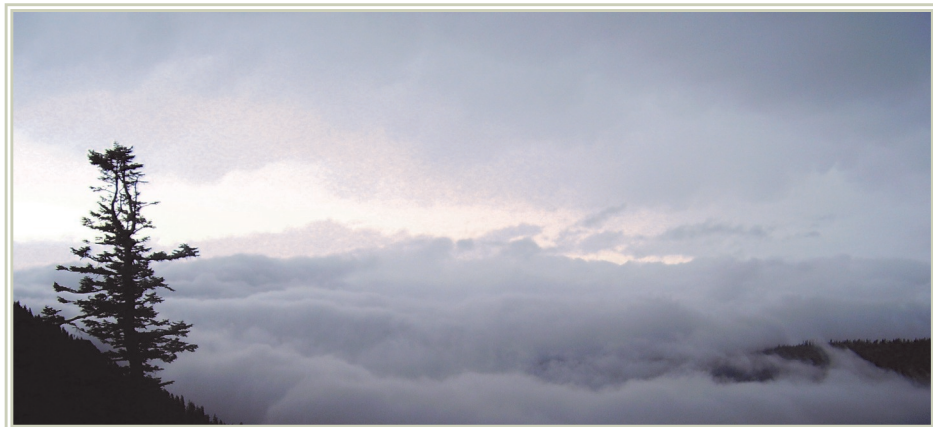
*Editor's Update*

As seems to be the rule rather than the exception, this issue is late in getting out. I ran into computer problems at the beginning of my vacation—a time period in which I had fantasies of making unprecedented progress in numerous projects. Unfortunately, I was forced to do various odds and ends which did not require a computer as I watched the days slip by one-by-one. It was frustrating, to say the least.

In this issue we make one of the changes mentioned a couple of issues ago. The “Gleanings from The Parousia” feature is now “Gleanings from the Past.” In this feature we will be presenting excerpts from a number of Preterist (or at least Preterist-slanted) works from days gone by. Our intent is to

ment about the creation of the physical universe, and then claim biblical prophecy is geared toward a covenant end. . . . We believe the opening chapters of Genesis are primarily a covenant statement, not a scientific account of the origin of the physical universe (p. 262). In this issue’s “Perspectives” column they provide an introduction to their view of Covenant Creation.

The creation debate often elicits strong emotions within Christianity and, judging by the varied responses to *Beyond Creation Science*, this trend continues within Preterism. We leave it to the reader to apply a Berean spirit to Covenant Creation and examine the Scriptures to see if these things are true.



show that many others have been travelling the Preterist road down through the centuries. They may not have always travelled far enough to reach Full Preterism, but the portions they did travel and the “signposts” they left behind can be a benefit to all who travel that road now.

One of the theological debates which I thought we would never address in an end-times prophecy magazine is the Genesis controversy of young-earth/old-earth. Not that creation is unimportant or uninteresting, but as a magazine which deals primarily with things pertaining to “the end,” one might easily conclude that things pertaining to “the beginning” would not be within our normal scope. Preterist authors Timothy P. Martin and Jeffrey L. Vaughn, PhD., believe that the two are much more closely related than many of us may have considered previously. In their book *Beyond Creation Science*, they emphasize the covenant context of the Creation account. They write: *It is simply inconsistent to believe Genesis is given primarily as a state-*

As we prepare to enter our fourth year of publishing Fulfilled! Magazine we continue to be blessed by the support and encouragement we receive from you. Your prayers, comments, and financial support let us know that this magazine is truly a ministry to readers. That encourages us to continue our late-night editing sessions.

We have several readers who display copies of *Fulfilled!* at their places of business or include them with shipped orders (usually theological books). We have prepared a flyer introducing *Fulfilled!* Magazine which we send out with our book orders. If you are interested in distributing these flyers send me an email and I’ll send you an electronic copy which you can print out for distribution.

Lastly, please note that my email address has changed: fcg.brian@yahoo.com

For Christ’s Glory,

*Brian*

## Mailbag

Each issue is excellent and done in a thoroughly professional manner. Keep up the good work! All glory to Jesus Christ,  
*Walt, Delaware*

We love *Fulfilled!* Magazine so much it's hard to put it down after we start reading it. Love the mailbag and to be able to share our views together. Makes it interesting. God bless you all—our prayers are with you.

*Ronald & Peggy, North Carolina*

The magazine is awesome! God bless,  
*Mike, Minnesota*

Wow! What a great issue. Just finished reading/studying "The Parousia," a gift from my father-in-law, and am re-reading the conclusion and appendices (after which, of course, I must read the book again).

Vol. 3 Issue 3 could not have come at a better time for me. I will be reading and studying it for a good while.

Thanks to you and all concerned.  
*Court, New York*



Do you have a computer and some spare time? FCG is looking for volunteers to transcribe a variety of video and audio materials, including archived Futurist prophecy television shows and Preterist lectures. We have been building a library of these materials and are hoping to have them transcribed into MS Word (or rich text) documents which we can then search for key terms. We hope to develop a database which will allow us to quickly locate specific material, aiding us in producing a variety of Preterist materials. For more information email me at:

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VOL. 3, ISSUE 3  
COULD NOT HAVE  
COME AT A  
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WHILE.



## *Gleanings from the Past*

Throughout the centuries of Church history, many writers have written from the perspective of a past fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Most of them failed to take that perspective to its logical conclusion (Full Preterism) and still applied a few various prophecies to their future. With that caveat in mind, their works contain many gems that can serve two purposes: 1) provide additional Preterist perspectives, and 2) demonstrate that although Full Preterism may have experienced its greatest development in the last fifty years, many others have been blazing that trail through the centuries. In this issue we offer an excerpt from Ernest Hampden-Cook's *Christ Has Come*. First published in 1895, we quote from the 3rd edition published in 1904 and since reprinted several times. Hampden-Cook concludes his chapter on the Epistle's teaching on the Second Coming with the following:

This brief review of the Epistles leaves but little doubt that the apostles believed, and continually taught their converts, that the Lord's return to the earth would take place in what *was then* the near future. It is true that Christians of later ages, fancying that the frank admission of the fact must result in dangerous consequences, have resisted the conclusion that this was really the belief and teaching of the apostles. Forgetting that the glad tidings with which the first preachers of Christianity were entrusted were emphatically "the glad tidings of the Kingdom," and that our Lord Himself had bidden them proclaim as a main part of their message the blessed fact that that Kingdom was then *at hand* (Matt 10:7), it has been repeatedly urged that the apostles did not attach the ordinary everyday meaning to such words as "shortly," but used them in a sense that admitted of an indefinite lapse of time intervening. In support of this contention a passage from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Epistle of Peter (3:8) is constantly quoted to prove that God's way of reckoning time is not the same as man's. Nay, more, it is confidently asserted that in one particular instance at least (2 Thess 2:2) we have direct evidence that the utterances of the apostles on the subject did not admit of the meaning we should otherwise have regarded as necessarily belonging thereto. To each of these objections there is an answer, showing that the wicked servant *did not speak the truth* when he said "My Lord *delayeth* His coming" (Luke 12:45). As a matter of fact, we know from Jeremiah 27:16, that the use of the word

"shortly" is incompatible with a lapse of 70 years, much more with one of 1800 years. The vessels of the temple were brought back to Jerusalem when after 70 years the children of Israel returned from captivity (Ezra 1:11). Yet when, at the beginning of the captivity, certain prophets predicted that this would happen *shortly*, God Himself by the mouth of Jeremiah characterized these men as liars. "Thus saith the Lord, hearken not to the words of your prophets that prophesy unto you, saying, 'Behold the vessels of the LORD'S house shall now shortly be brought again from Babylon,' *for they prophesy a lie unto you.*"

"After the lapse of perhaps hundreds of years" may be the exact opposite of "shortly," and if the language used admits of this delay having really occurred, then it must have conveyed a false impression to those to whom it was originally addressed. Moreover all certainty in religion ceases, for words have no longer any fixed signification, and we can never be sure, for example, that in the apostolic vocabulary "good" does not mean "evil," and "evil" "good." Further, a little consideration will at once show that 2 Peter 3:8 does not justify the inference that if God has said that a certain event will happen in one day's time it is possible that, after all, it may not happen for a thousand years, or that, something which He has declared will take place a thousand years hence may take us by surprise by occurring tomorrow. In reality this verse is evidence in exactly the opposite direction to that in which it is usually quoted, for the writer is there arguing for the *punctu-*



## The Christ Has Come

ality with which God keeps His promises when they fall due; it, matters not whether the time previously specified for their fulfillment be exceedingly short—*one day*, or exceedingly long—a *thousand years*! With regard to 2 Thessalonians 2:2, reference has been already made to the fact that Paul does not contradict his previous utterances by admitting that, after all, Christ's return to the earth may prove to be an event of the distant future. But writing about 52 A.D., nearly 20 years before the destruction of Jerusalem, he corrects the erroneous idea that the day of the Lord had now actually arrived ("is now present"—Revised Bible).

When once the fact is realized that the apostles not only believed, but also continually taught, that Christ was to return to judgment in the near future, one of two results inevitably follows. Either the coming of the Lord to judge His enemies and to set up His heavenly Kingdom took place shortly after the New Testament epistles were written, or else the apostles were altogether mistaken when they so confidently predicted that such would be the case. Partly from not fully apprehending the resulting consequences, the latter supposition is that which has usually prevailed. In explanation, it has been plausibly urged that it is a small thing for the apostles to have been mistaken in their "perspective," and that previously to His ascension Jesus Himself had reminded them that it was not for them to know times, and seasons (Acts 1:7). But to argue thus is to ignore the fact that, like John the Baptist, they had been specially sent out into the world to herald the immediate coming of the heavenly Kingdom, and that although at Christ's ascension much that concerned their ministry and their message may have remained hidden from them, this

can no longer have been the case after the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). They were then filled with the Holy Spirit—that spirit of truth which the Lord Jesus had promised should certify them from error and guide them into all the truth so far as their mission and message to the world were concerned, and especially enlighten them as to the things which were soon to happen.

"The Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, *He shall teach you all things*" (John 14:26).

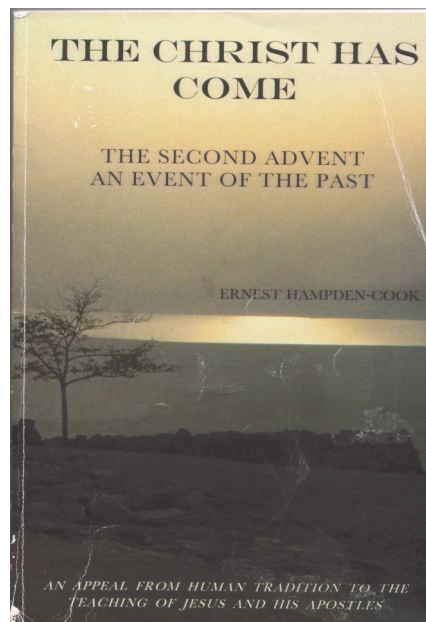
"When He, the Spirit of truth is come, He shall guide you into all the truth . . . . He shall declare unto you *the things that are to come*" (John 16:13).

"Ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and *ye know all things*" (1 John 2:20).

To admit that the apostles were, one and all, mistaken in teaching the immediateness of the Lord's advent is to inflict a grievous wound upon what has always been regarded as

the Divine authority and inspiration with which they spoke and wrote, and greatly to weaken respect for their utterances on other subjects.

Happily, however, we are not shut up to the painful conclusion that the apostles and the whole primitive church were thus the victims of a strong delusion, and that all their confident, expectations as to the immediateness of the Lord's return ended in a *fiasco*. A candid examination of the Gospel narratives renders it abundantly clear that these expectations cannot have been falsified, since they rested on the plain, emphatic, and constantly repeated declarations of One who is the embodiment of all truth—the Son of God, Himself. ❧





# CREATION TO CO

## Studies in Reden

### All These Things Came To Pass (Part 2)

Ed Stevens

In the Summer 2008 issue we began a series about the fulfillment of all the events mentioned in the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 23-25 and its parallels in the other two synoptic gospels). We listed twelve biblical texts of which Futurists like Tommy Ice strongly deny first-century fulfillment. In this second installment of our series, we will examine Matthew 24:3 and its mention of the Parousia. We will address the remaining passages in subsequent articles.

Due to space limitations only the source citations which support the fulfillment of the events mentioned in these texts will be given. If you would like to read the full text of all these references from Josephus, Tacitus, Eusebius, and Yosippon, simply send me an email ([preterist1@preterist.org](mailto:preterist1@preterist.org)) requesting the *Historical References Printout* (PDF), and I will send it as an email attachment.

**Matt 24:3** *As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your Coming [Gk. Parousia], and of the End of the Age?"*

Futurists deny that the Second Coming (the Parousia) and End of the Age have occurred because of their concepts of those events. Futurists believe these events will consist of a physical earth-burning, universe-collapsing, end-of-the-world fulfillment. They use this concept of the *nature* of fulfillment to negate the first-century *time* of fulfillment. They reason that since Planet Earth did not burn up and the universe did not self-destruct in AD 70, then the time of fulfillment must not have been in the first century. But this line of reasoning leaves Jesus and the New Testament writers in the jaws of the critics.

The time statements make one thing very clear: Jesus and the New Testament writers firmly believed (and taught) that the Parousia would occur in the lifetime of His first disciples. This leaves us with two choices: We must either (1) charge Jesus and the New Testament writers with error regarding their predictions of a first-century *timing* of the Parousia, or (2) we have to reconfigure our understanding of the *nature* of fulfillment to fit a first-century time frame. Futurists have taken the first option, all the while denying that it has any negative implications against the integrity of Jesus and the apostles. But liberals, skeptics, and critics of Christianity have pressed the issue and used it to discredit Christianity.

Those same critics are quick to praise Preterists for our recognition of a first-century *time* of fulfillment, but then attack us for our failure to produce evidence for the *nature* of fulfillment that was expected by the first-century saints. For instance, one atheist (Prof Myth on the YouTube video series entitled *Jesus Was Wrong*) stated that the immediate context of the Olivet Discourse describes a visible, audible, and experiential Parousia. He then alleges that since nothing fitting this description is documented in history, it must not have happened, and therefore Preterists are wrong and Jesus was wrong. (If you would like to hear his comments, I have copied the salient parts of it into my speeches at the 2008 Garrettsville, Ohio seminar—available on our website: [www.preterist.org](http://www.preterist.org)).

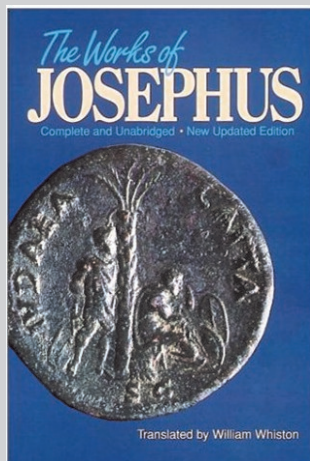
So we see it is the *nature* of fulfillment, not just the time of fulfillment, which emboldens the critics to deny an AD 70 Parousia. Preterists are under obligation to show that those events really did occur—not merely at the *time* they were promised, but also in the very *manner* that Jesus and the New Testament writers indicated. Therefore, we need to search for evidence which demonstrates that those events were fulfilled in the manner expected.

Here is what Jesus said in His Olivet Discourse about what His disciples could expect to *see, hear, and experience* at the Parousia. Notice how He describes the *nature* of fulfillment:

1. **Matt 24:26-27** So if they say to you, "Behold, He is in the wilderness," do not go out, or, "Behold, He is in the inner rooms," do not believe them. For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

His Parousia would **not be hidden** (in the wilderness, or an inner room). It would be openly manifested for the disciples to see, just as lightning flashing across the sky. The disciples would not fail to see it. Historians say that the first-century Jews saw some extraordinary things that were clear signs of God's presence to destroy Jerusalem. These signs were very visible and well-documented. [See Josephus *Wars* 6.5.3 (6:296-300); Tacitus (*The Histories* Bk. 5, Sect. 13); Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* (Bk. 3, Ch. 8, sect. 5); Yosippon (*Sepher Yosippon*, Ch. 87 on the Burning of the Temple).]

2. **Matt 24:30-31** *And then the sign of the Son of Man will be displayed in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. And He will send forth*





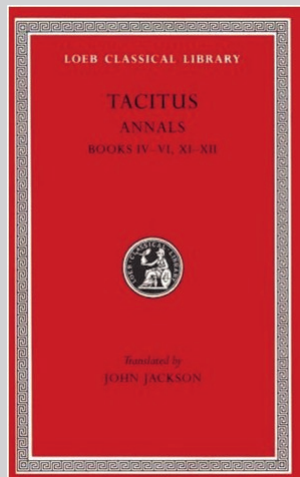
# CONSUMMATION

## Temptive History



*His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.*

- a. The **sign of the Son of Man** would be displayed in the sky for them to see. [See Josephus *Wars* 6.5.3 (6:289-292); *Wars* 2.22.1 (2:650); Tacitus (*The Histories* Bk. 5, Sect. 13); Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* (Bk. 3, Ch. 8); Yosippon (*Sepher Yosippon*, Ch. 87 on the Burning of the Temple).]
- b. All twelve tribes in the land would **mourn** over the coming destruction of their temple and homeland. [See Josephus *Wars* 2.17.10 (2:454-455); *Wars* 2.20.1 (2:556); *Wars* 2.22.1 (2:649-650); and the *Life* (of Josephus) sections 5-6.]
- c. The disciples would **see** with their physical eyes the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with divine power and great glory. In the references cited above, Josephus mentions chariots being seen in the sky with the angelic armies. R. C. Sproul Sr., in his 1999 National Conference speech entitled, *Last Days Madness*, suggested that the reference to chariots being seen in the clouds could be the same chariot throne of Yahweh that Ezekiel saw, the whirling Merkabah (see Ezekiel chapters 1 and 10). Yosippon says, "there was seen from above over the Holy of Holies for the whole night the outline of a man's face, the like of whose beauty had never been seen in all the land and his appearance was quite awesome." [See Yosippon (*Sepher Yosippon*, Ch.87 on the Burning of the Temple).]
- d. The elect **heard** a loud trumpet sound when Christ sent forth His angels to gather them. The elect were Christians who remained alive until the Parousia (Matt 24:22, 24). The living elect **experienced** the angelic **gathering** by the angels (their **redemption**, cf. Luke 21:28) and were taken to **stand before the Son of Man** (cf. Luke 21:36). Both Josephus and Yosippon mention that the priests in the Temple saw and heard some things at the time of those supernatural signs. [See Josephus *Wars* 6.5.3 (6:299-300); Yosippon (*Sepher Yosippon*, Ch. 87 "Burning of the Temple").] Because the elect were gathered by the angels and taken to be in the presence of Christ, they were not around afterward to document what they had seen, heard, and experienced. But enough is



recorded in Josephus, Tacitus, Eusebius, and Yosippon to conclude that *it must have happened in the very manner Jesus had predicted.*

3. **Luke 21:25-28, 36** "There will be **signs** in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations . . . and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the **powers of the heavens will be shaken.**"

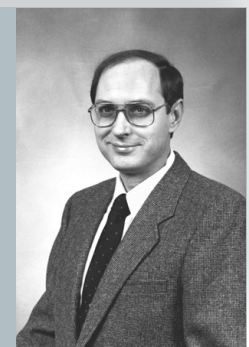
**Signs** in the sun, moon, and stars. These were astrological and cosmic occurrences which signaled terrible events looming on the horizon. [See Josephus *Wars* 6.5.3 (6:289-291).] The tributary nations of the Roman empire were also in disorder [See Josephus *Wars* Preface 1:4-5; *Wars* 7.4.2 (7:75-79); *Wars* 4.4.5 (4:286-287).] The demonic powers in the unseen spiritual realm (heavenly places) were being shaken out of their place in the air above and sent to the Lake of Fire. The book of Revelation foretold this defeat and punishment of the demonic forces, indicating that it occurred in the unseen spiritual realm at the time Jerusalem and the Temple were being destroyed. It is worthy of note that Eusebius produced an apologetic work against the pagan philosophers entitled, *The Theophania*, which contains many Preteristic statements. In it he affirms the overthrow of the demonic world by the work of Christ. These same types of events were expected to happen in conjunction with the Parousia, so the Parousia must have happened, and *in the very nature of fulfillment that was predicted by Christ and expected by the first-century saints.*

For a more detailed explanation of the resurrection and rapture that occurred in conjunction with the Parousia, I would recommend my book, *Expectations Demand A First Century Rapture*, which is available from the IPA website ([www.preterist.org](http://www.preterist.org)). ☒

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# OBJECTION OVERRULED

## Responding to the Objections Don K. Preston

*Some prophecy teachers claim that Isaiah 13's prophecy of the destruction of Babylon is yet future because, although the Medo-Persians captured Babylon, Babylon was never conquered. Furthermore, Isaiah prophesies that Babylon would 'never be inhabited,' yet it has been inhabited in some form to this day. What is a Preterist response?*

The opponents of Covenant Eschatology are constantly “grasping at straws” in order to respond to the power of the Truth. One of the most common objections offered is the preceding from Isaiah 13.

Let's take a quick look at this objection. First of all, please note the somewhat desperate attempt to delineate between the *capture* of Babylon and the *conquering* of Babylon. I would suggest that the readers ask themselves this question: If Babylon was *captured*, were they in fact not *conquered*? How do you capture the capital city of a kingdom, without conquering it?

The historical fact is that Babylon was conquered by the Medo-Persians. One has but to read any good critical commentary or work of history to realize that the kingdom of Babylon which existed in the days of Daniel ceased to exist on the fateful night described in Daniel 5. The ancient historians Xenophon and Herodotus, cited in Boutflower, clearly describe the conquering of Babylon by the Medo-Persian empire. The *Zondervan Pictorial Dictionary of the Bible* refers to, “the overthrow of the city” by Cyrus. The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* says that Cyrus entered the city, “thus ending the Chaldean dynasty as predicted by the Hebrew prophets.”

Second, one needs to understand the focus of the prophecies. One of the mistakes of modern readers is to miss the point of the prophecy. The modern reader has a tendency to focus on purely physical features, such as the “it will never be inhabited” statements, and as a result, the point is missed. What is the point? That *the kingdom which existed* at that time, as the enemy of YHVH, would cease to exist. Certainly, the city itself was a symbol and sign of that specific kingdom. However, when the leaders of that kingdom were destroyed, that kingdom ceased to exist—forever! The physical walls of the ancient city did not constitute the kingdom! YHVH's concern was not with the physical walls but with the leaders of that city,

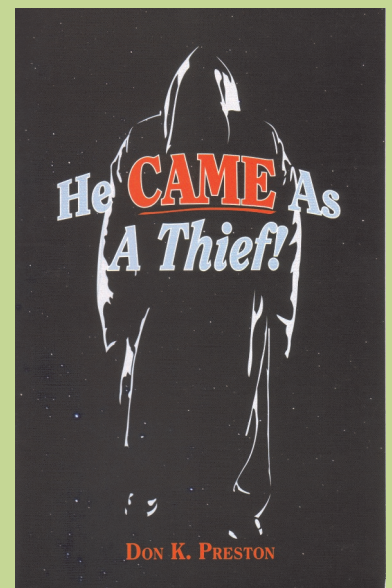
who were the powers of that kingdom. Like-

wise, we need to understand this same focus of attention in Isaiah 14, which describes the fall of “Lucifer”, the king of Babylon. Lucifer's (i.e. Nebuchadnezzar's) kingdom, which had captured Jerusalem, came to an end. It was conquered and absorbed into the Medo-Persian Empire. This is an indisputable fact of history.

The argument that the city (actually *part* of the city) continued to exist is irrelevant to the prophetic issue. The point is that the kingdom of Babylon, the enemy of God that destroyed YHVH's city and temple, was destroyed.

Another issue, directly related to the above, is the error of interpreting the prophecies of Scripture in a woodenly literal manner. It is argued that since Babylon as a city has been inhabited for many years, and because even in modern times, Saddam Hussein attempted to rebuild the city of Babylon (unsuccessfully we might add), that this negates the Preterist perspective. This is simply not true. (We might add here that Amillennialists and Postmillennialists agree with the Preterist view that Babylon was conquered in fulfillment of Isaiah 13-14 and Daniel. So, the Preterist is not alone in contending for the fulfillment of these prophecies.) The fact that buildings remained in Babylon after her fall does not mean that the kingdom of Babylon still remained.

As we noted previously, when the powers that represented that kingdom were removed the *kingdom* fell, and the prophecy must be seen as fulfilled. High walls, strong fortifications, and people



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# OBJECTION: OVERRULED!



nothing in regard to whether *the kingdom fell!*

Our point is verified by Daniel 2, in which Nebuchadnezzar was given the vision of a great statue. The statue has a head of gold, a chest of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, and feet of iron mixed with clay. In this familiar story, Daniel interpreted the dream to mean that there were four world empires that were to exist in sequence, until the

remaining in the city after its conquering mean kingdom of heaven would be established in the days of the fourth empire, Rome. The thing to notice for our purposes is that Babylon was clearly and indisputably the head of gold—you are this head of gold (Daniel 2:38).

Now, each kingdom in the series would destroy and replace the previous kingdom. Did the Medo-Persian replace the Babylonian empire? Patently so! Likewise, in Daniel 7 we find the four beasts, the first being “like a lion and had eagle’s wings” (Daniel 7:3-4), and it represented Babylon. But, in the vision, that beast’s wings were plucked off and the kingdom like a lion be-

came like a mere man. This patently represented the destruction of the Babylonian kingdom that gave way to the Medo-Persian Empire.

Finally, we would take notice that one of the reasons that it is claimed that the prophecies of Babylon’s destruction were never fulfilled is because of *theology*. Here is what we mean. Due to the woodenly literal hermeneutic, it is popular among Dispensationalists to argue that literal Babylon of Iraq is the Babylon of Revelation. The argument is made that the predictions of Babylon’s demise—just

noted—have never been fulfilled, but will be fulfilled during the seven year Great Tribulation period, which supposedly follows the rapture.

There was tremendous speculation surrounding Saddam Hussein’s attempt to rebuild the ancient city, and the fact that he reportedly saw himself as a reincarnation of Nebuchadnezzar. Numerous books were written prior to the first Gulf War, claiming that Babylon was being rebuilt and the end was near! Those claims have been falsified of course, and the reality is that Babylon of Revelation was not, and is not literal Babylon in Iraq.

Babylon in Revelation is a figurative designation for the city, not the true name of the city. Furthermore, in Revelation, Babylon is depicted as the city that had killed the prophets of God (Revelation 16:6f), and the apostles and prophets of Jesus (Revelation 18:20-24). Ask yourself: Did literal Babylon ever kill a prophet? The answer is a resounding NO!

Ancient, literal Babylon tried, and *tried hard*, to kill YHVH’s prophets, with no success! Remember Daniel in the lion’s den? And what about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego? So, it cannot be argued that literal Babylon is the Babylon of Revelation, for she never killed a single prophet, and most assuredly never killed a single apostle or prophet of Jesus. (See my book, *Who Is This Babylon?* for a full discussion of the identity of Babylon of Revelation.)

In summary, we not only have the testimony of Daniel 5 that tells us that Babylon fell as predicted; we have the testimony of ancient historians, and, we have the corroboration of the other prophecies in the book of Daniel. Finally, we have scriptural proof that Babylon of Revelation cannot be literal Babylon in Iraq, thus destroying the underlying theology that denies the fulfillment of the prophecies of Babylon’s destruction.

It is only by imposing an artificial hermeneutic on the text that we can deny the fulfillment of God’s prophecies concerning Babylon. That *kingdom* fell, and has never risen again, and will never rise again! This is not simply a Preterist response to the objection; it is a biblical and historical fact. The objection is overruled!

Don Preston is President of the *Preterist Research Institute*. He may be reached at:

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Jesus is coming “as a thief in the night” we are told, and that means that there will be no signs, no indication of His coming. Furthermore, this proves, *supposedly*, that the coming of Christ in the A.D. 70 judgment of Israel cannot be His thief coming. After all, we are told, Jesus said there would be *signs of that event*.

In “He Came as a Thief,” Don K. Preston tackles the above argument against Full Preterism head-on. Order your copy online or contact Don.

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logy.org

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Timothy P. Martin & Jeffrey L. Vaughn

### What Is Covenant Creation?

Preterists recognize that the “end” spoken of in prophecy is not the end of the physical world. Rather, it is the end of the old covenant, the end of the “old creation,” the passing away of “the first heaven and the first earth” (Rev 21:1). We call this Covenant Eschatology.

Covenant Creation views the original “heavens and earth” which God made “in the beginning” (Gen 1:1) as directly related to God’s creation of the “new heaven and new earth” (Rev 21:1).

If the “end” spoken of in prophecy is the end of the old covenant order and has nothing to do with the end of the physical universe, then we think it is time to ask some very important questions:

- Does the biblical “beginning” match the biblical “end”?
- When did God introduce the old covenant order?
- Could the Genesis creation account speak about the beginning of the covenant world of God’s relationship to his people rather than the beginning of the physical universe?

Why would the Bible open with an account of the creation of the physical universe and then change subjects completely to close with prophecy of a covenant end?

These are difficult questions, but reflect on the current scenario for a moment. Preterism is, by its very nature, the outright rejection of the belief that prophecy speaks about the end of the physical world. At the same time, Preterists have assumed the Genesis creation is a literal statement about the origin of the physical world. Do you realize what that means? It means that most Preterists have viewed the central subject of creation in the “beginning” as *completely different* from the central subject of prophecy and the “end.”

Is it possible that Preterists have yet to explore the full implications of Preterism in the first chapters of Genesis? Advocates of Covenant Creation suggest that it is time to self-consciously rethink Genesis creation according to Preterist principles.

Covenant Eschatology challenges all common eschatological views because they view the

“end” in terms of the physical world. Likewise, Covenant Creation challenges all common creation views because they view the “beginning” in terms of the physical world. The principles Covenant Eschatology apply to the “end” are the same principles that Covenant Creation apply to the “beginning.” Covenant Creation and Covenant Eschatology match.

### The Unity of the Biblical Story

For generations, theologians and biblical scholars of every persuasion have written about the intimate connection between the “beginning” and the “end.” Every form of Futurism begins with a physical-world view of Genesis creation and then concludes logically with the belief that prophecies of the “new heaven and new earth” describe some new physical universe to come at the end of the physical world.

That is a symmetrical view of the Bible. Futurism, though far removed from the biblical context and redemptive focus of biblical prophecy, has a consistent view of the “beginning” and the “end.” Could it be that Futurism’s error regarding the “end” is ultimately rooted in its understanding of what God created “in the beginning?”

A related issue is the *nature* of God’s curse pronounced at the Fall in Genesis 3. The majority of evangelical Christians believe that God created a world with no pain, no suffering, and no physical death. They teach that Adam’s sin brought pain, suffering, and death on the entire physical world. Since the “end” must undo the Fall, and since mankind’s Fall brought *physical* pain and suffering, the “end” must terminate *physical* pain and suffering. The implication of this view is that God created “toothless” lions as grass-eaters, laying down and chewing the cud with the calf. Since the Fall somehow changed the lion into a dangerous meat-eater, the “end” must bring about the salvation of the lion, restoring him to his “sinless” grass-eating, cud-chewing state (argued from Isaiah 11:6 and 65:25).

*Authors Timothy P. Martin & Jeffrey L. Vaughn provide an introduction to the book “Beyond Creation” which is the subject of the book “Beyond Creation.”*





This biological view of the curse leads logically to a biological view of the redemption to come. In contrast, a covenantal view of the curse leads logically to a covenantal/spiritual redemption accomplished by Christ in the first century. Futurism and Preterism part ways in Genesis based on two competing interpretations of “the death” that fell on the creation as a result of Adam’s violation of God’s command. The scope of this divide, however, is larger than the single issue of the curse. Can the nature of the curse be separated from the nature of creation? *Futurism’s biological view of the curse in Genesis 3 is merely one aspect of Futurism’s biological view of Genesis creation!*

One strength of Preterism is that it brings so many details in Scripture together in remarkable unity. There is no chaos in New Testament prophecy. It is one recurring, coherent message which reflects the theological, apologetic, and physical struggle of

sea is not talking about the end of the oceans? Why don’t Preterists take the Bible *literally*?!

The answer is the *framework* of prophecy. Clear time-statements for fulfillment require a symbolic interpretation of the apocalyptic texts. Moreover, we have scriptural precedent for symbolic interpretation since the prophets often used prophetic-apocalyptic symbolism or “collapsing-universe” language to describe God’s judgments.

The Genesis creation uses the opposite “constructing-universe” language in reference to the forming of God’s covenant relationship with Adam and Eve. They found themselves in a new (covenant) world when God created them and revealed himself to them. The symbolism of “constructing universe” in the creation account is patterned around covenant formation, just as the symbolism of “collapsing-universe” language is patterned around covenant *decreation* in prophetic texts.

Why are the elements of the Genesis creation symbolic? Again, the answer is the *framework* of the Genesis creation. There are statements in the creation account that indicate the subject at hand is God’s people:

Thus the heavens and the earth,  
and all the host of them, were  
finished (Gen 2:1 NKJV)

Preterists should note the “heavens and earth” language as well as another detail. The “host” is associated with the “the heavens and the earth.” English translations interpret this in a variety of ways, but the underlying Hebrew word for “host” is a common Hebrew word used often to reference God’s people. Israel came up out of Egypt as a “host” (Exod 12:51)—the same Hebrew word found in Genesis 2:1. Another four examples can be found in Daniel’s prophecy regarding the persecution of God’s people in the last days (Dan 8:10-13, 19). The subject of the creation account is the “host”—God’s army—which is a new people. Genesis 2:4 (KJV) offers another indicator: “These are the *generations* of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.” Why is it that the “heavens and earth” involve generations? The form of this verse (“These are the generations of . . .”) is used throughout Genesis

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Martin and Jeffrey Vaughn  
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Genesis. A correct understanding of Genesis creation is crucial to Preterism.

### The Genesis Creation as God’s People

Covenant Creation employs a specific hermeneutic approach to Genesis creation that takes into consideration the symbolism of the elements used in the creation account.<sup>1</sup> At first glance, the idea that the Genesis “heavens and earth” creation is speaking about the formation of God’s people might seem strange. It is easy to literalize the imagery of the sea, the land, the sun, moon, and stars and assume the physical universe is the topic of conversation in Genesis.

Consider what happens when Futurists pick up prophetic texts like Matthew 24:29ff and Revelation that use creation imagery to communicate God’s covenant judgment. What? Those falling stars are not literal? The sun and moon being darkened is not a reference to the literal sky? The disappearance of the

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(e.g., 5:1; 6:9; 10:1, 32; 11:10). In *every other instance* where this form is used, the reference is to people. Genesis 2:4 references generations in conjunction with “heavens and earth” because the creation account speaks about the original formation of God’s people. The Genesis creation is a symbolic statement, involving real people in real history, describing the “beginning” of God’s covenant world of friendship and relationship with His people.

### The “Heavens and Earth” of the Law

Describing people with the symbolic imagery of “heaven and earth and sea” continues throughout Genesis. We see the association of all three symbolic elements of creation in the promise given to Abraham (Gen 13:16; 15:4-6; 22:17). Joseph had a dream about the sun, moon and eleven stars (heavens) as well as another dream of shocks of wheat (earth) bowing down to him (Gen 37:6-11; cf. Matt 13:30, 41-43). The heavens and earth constituted the entire family of Israel.<sup>2</sup>

Moses addressed Israel as heavens and earth:

Listen, O heavens, and I will speak; hear, O earth, the words of my mouth . . . . (Deut 32:1 NIV)

If Moses calls Israel “heavens” and “earth,” why then would Genesis 1:1 be a description of the physical universe? Moses knew that “heavens and earth” is God’s people, formed through God’s special *covenant* creation. Moses makes another unique creation reference to Israel in that same passage:

In a desert land he found him, in a barren and howling *waste*. He shielded him and cared for him; he guarded him as the apple of his eye, like an eagle that stirs up its nest and *hovers* over its young . . . . (Deut 32:10-11 NIV; emphasis ours)

Consider the connection to creation as explained by David Chilton:

Moses uses two key words in this passage: *waste* and *hover*. Both of these words occur only one other time in the

entire Pentateuch, and again they occur together, in Genesis 1:2. . . . The Covenant on Sinai was a re-creation, a reorganization of the world.<sup>3</sup>

What world was reorganized? Moses’ language takes us back to the “heavens and earth” of Genesis 1! Did the physical universe change at Sinai? If the revelation of the Sinai covenant could *recreate* and *reorganize* the world, then the world in focus as God’s creation could not be the physical universe.

There are many more connections between the Law and original creation in Genesis. The heavens, earth and

sea aspect of tabernacle and temple architecture draw from Genesis 1. The seven feasts correspond to the seven days of creation. The typological furniture and structure of the tabernacle and temple system correspond to details described in the Garden of Eden. The Genesis creation is the covenant backdrop, from the cherubim in the holy of holies guarding the place of God’s presence above the mercy-seat, to the golden lampstand with branches (cf. the tree of life in Exod 25), to the precious memorial gemstones of the priest’s ephod (cf. Eden’s jewels in Exod 28), to the linen garments that kept the High Priest from sweating (Exod 28; Ezek 44:18 cf. Gen 3:19). The roots of the Mosaic Law go back to creation.



### The “Heavens and Earth” of the Prophets

Consider how Jeremiah speaks about “heavens and earth” in the same vein as Genesis creation:

I beheld the earth and indeed it was *without form, and void*; And the heavens, they had no light. (Jer 4:23 NKJV)

What is Jeremiah talking about in this passage? Where does that language *originate*? Jeremiah speaks in the context of the impending judgment on Judah and Jerusalem in 586 BC, but he uses the *exact same language* (Hebrew, *tohu wahohu*) found only in Genesis 1:2! The “heavens and earth” had, quite literally, become “without form and void” again because of wickedness in the land. Jeremiah could use that language to



describe the corrupt nation because he understood that the Genesis creation speaks about the formation of God's people by covenant. Creation had become undone because God's people had violated the covenant. Isaiah's prophecies also draw from the early chapters of Genesis:

Behold, I will create *new heavens and a new earth*. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. . . . They will not toil in vain [curse on Adam] or bear children doomed to misfortune [curse on Eve]; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them. . . . The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food [curse on the serpent] . . . (Isa 65:17, 23-25 NIV; emphasis ours, cf. Gen 3:14-19)

Notice how Isaiah uses *the exact same language as Genesis 1:1*. Isaiah says God will "create (*bara*—same Hebrew verb as Gen 1:1) new heavens and a new earth." Preterists recognize Isaiah 65 as the background for the "new heaven and new earth" in New Testament prophecy (e.g., 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1). But *from where* did Isaiah get the original concept of "heavens and earth"? The language of Isaiah 65 takes us back to the "beginning" in Genesis 1:1.

When Preterists highlight the link between Isaiah 65 and the *end* of the Bible, it is only consistent to accept the prophet's own link back to the *beginning* of the Bible. If Futurists are unjustified in their attempt to change the definition of the "heavens and earth" of Isaiah 65 to a physical universe meaning in the New Testament, then Preterists are equally unjustified to force a change in the definition of "heavens and earth" from Isaiah 65 back to Genesis 1:1. The consistent *language* from Genesis 1:1 to Isaiah 65 to New Testament fulfillment requires a consistent *interpretation*.

Isaiah did not invent anything new in chapter 65. He worked, by inspiration, from the past story he already knew! The "new heaven and new earth" is the re-creation of God's people, using symbolic animals and elements of creation, because the original "heavens and earth" is the creation of God's people, using symbolic animals and elements of creation. Everything at the

end of the story originates from the beginning through Isaiah the prophet. Isaiah 65 serves as a great bridge that spans across the pages of Scripture reaching simultaneously backward into Genesis 1-3 and forward to Revelation 21-22.

### Jesus and the Apostles on the Genesis Creation

Jesus set His eschatological teaching in the wide context of old covenant history, referencing the earliest chapters of Genesis. He claimed the judgment to come would be comprehensive. The guilt of "all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah" was to "come upon this generation" (Matt 23:35-36 NKJV). He also claimed the Great Tribulation would be "unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again" (Matt 24:21 NIV).

Preterists are quick to understand these statements within a covenant context. That first-century generation would be held accountable for all the righteous blood spilled in *covenant* history, not world history. The Tribulation would be the worst distress in *covenant* history, not world history. This approach, if applied consistently, would mean "the beginning of the world" must be understood in the same covenant context—Covenant Creation.

Paul draws from the earliest chapters of Genesis and identified "the creation" as God's people in a passage expounding the glory of the children of God being set free:

For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. (Rom 8:19-22 NKJV)

Where did Paul learn to associate "the creation" with God's people? He certainly didn't make this up! "The creation" is God's people. Paul's view of the curse matched his view of the creation. Paul's teaching assumes Covenant Creation because the physical universe is nowhere in view when Paul mentions "the creation."

*cont. on next page*



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This covenant-centered focus of creation explains how Paul could call those who believe on Jesus Christ God's "new creation" in Galatians 6:15 and 2 Corinthians 5:17. To what does Paul appeal as his authority? He quotes Genesis 1:3:

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 4:6 NIV)

The book of Hebrews explicitly connects the beginning with the end:

... *In the beginning*, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands, they will perish, but you remain . . . . (Heb 1:10-11 NIV)

What God created "in the beginning" perished at the "end." Did the physical universe pass away in AD 70? No. That fact provides a powerful demonstration that Genesis' "in the beginning" creation is not a plain-literal account of the original formation of the physical universe. Hebrews 1:10-11 tells us that Genesis is about the beginning of the covenant world God made with his people, beginning with Adam and Eve.

Peter also draws a parallel between creation, flood, and consummation:

For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men (2 Pet 3:5-7 NKJV)

Peter references the formation of dry land that "stood" out of water on Day Three (Gen 1:9-10). This world—with the exception of righteous Noah and his family who became a "new" covenant world—was destroyed by the flood,<sup>4</sup> just as Peter's current "heavens and earth" was reserved for fire. Preterists believe the destruction of Peter's "heavens and earth" by fire is a reference to a covenant world, not the physical universe. Peter's three-way comparison shows that *creation and the flood must be understood in the same covenant context as the fire of AD 70*.

We find another example of the inescapable relationship between the beginning and end of the Bible in the final pages of Revelation:

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first earth had passed away. Also there was no sea. (Rev 21:1 NKJV)

Note how the elements listed draw from Genesis 1. That is where God created the "heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1) and "the sea" (Gen 1:9-10, 20). The immediate context before this passage describes the Great White Throne judgment of "earth and heaven" (20:11) and "sea" (20:13). John works directly from the *full context* of creation as he goes on to write about the holy city in Edenic imagery drawn from creation. Don Preston notes in passing that the entire creation would be destroyed at the end of the Millennium:

Notice now that in Revelation 21, the heavens and earth pass away at the end of the millennium . . . . [T]he great Day of the Lord was to occur at the time of the *destruction of creation*, at the judgment of Babylon, and since *creation was to be destroyed at the end of the millennium*, then the vindication of the martyrs, in the judgment

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FROM GENESIS TO REVELATION



on Babylon, was to occur at the end of the millennium.<sup>5</sup> [emphasis ours]

The destruction of creation? Yes! What Genesis 1-3 does, Revelation 21-22 undoes. AD 70 marked the final end of the old covenant age, the old world of types and shadows. The entire old creation has been recreated in Christ. However, the physical heavens and earth were not destroyed and recreated in AD 70. Indeed, the biblical “end” had no bearing on the physical operation of the sun, moon, stars, and planet Earth.

Neither did the biblical “beginning.”

Preterists have made the transition to Covenant Eschatology. We believe it is time to transition to Covenant Creation.

### **Covenant Creation: Consistent Full Preterism**

Preterists recognize that no solution to end-time debates is possible so long as the “end” is viewed in terms of the physical universe. “Partial” solutions that view the “end” with double vision, seeing both a covenant world and the physical universe, fare no better.

Traditional debates over the Genesis creation are not solvable for the very same reason. They all hinge on physical-universe assumptions about the “beginning.” “Partial” solutions that view the “beginning” with double vision, seeing both a covenant world and the physical universe, are impossible for a very simple reason. All prophecy of the “new creation”

is rooted, ultimately, in the Genesis creation. Creation is all about the gospel of Jesus Christ, just as biblical prophecy is all about the gospel of Jesus Christ. Could it be that consistent Full Preterism begins in Genesis 1:1? ❌

<sup>1</sup> In *Biblical Apocalypics* (1898), 19<sup>th</sup> century Preterist theologian Milton S. Terry, showed how the earliest chapters of Genesis use apocalyptic language and symbolic detail similar to the prophets and the book of Revelation. He viewed creation “as truly a sevenfold revelation of a beginning as the Apocalypse of John is a mystic revelation of an end (p. 44). We make an extended case for this prophetic/symbolic view of the creation account in *Beyond Creation Science*.

<sup>2</sup> Note that the imagery in Joseph’s dream has no reference to “sea.” Israel is “land” in God’s original creation of the old covenant world.

<sup>3</sup> David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (Ft. Worth, TX: Dominion Press, 1987), p. 320.

<sup>4</sup> We present a full case for a local flood related to a covenant judgment in *Beyond Creation Science*, pp. 111-207.

<sup>5</sup> Don K. Preston, *Who is This Babylon?* (Ardmore, OK: JaDon Productions, 2006), pp. 268-269

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# FULFILLED MAGAZINE

## Prophecy Quiz

*For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. (Matthew 5:18)*

The term “jot” comes from the Hebrew “yod,” which is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet. The term “tittle” in the Greek means “horn, point, an extremity,” and is used to describe the small marks that distinguish similar Hebrew letters from one another, much like a small line distinguishes the English “E” from an “F” or “O” from a “Q.” Has one jot or tittle passed from the law? Has the law been fulfilled?

**No**—if you answered *no* then you must explain how the absence of the temple, the priesthood, and the sacrificial system of the law does not constitute one jot or tittle passing away. Indeed, it would appear that the majority of the letters (if not the whole alphabet) have vanished, let alone a jot or tittle. Furthermore, if the law has not been fulfilled, one must explain why we are not obligated to follow every jot and tittle of its regulations.

**Yes**—if you answered *yes* then you must admit that heaven and earth have passed away. This indicates that the phrase “heaven and earth” means something other than the physical universe. Many commentators recognize that phrases such as “the sun will be darkened,” and “the moon will not give its light” are metaphors for the downfall of nations, and do not refer to literal astronomical events. If we are willing to see these metaphors as the constituents of the “heaven and earth” of which Jesus spoke, and see the law as fulfilled in Christ, then we can see both the law and the heaven and earth which it constituted as passing away when everything that encompassed and represented that system passed away in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

## 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!

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

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