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FULFILLED!

PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS OF
FULFILLED PROPHECY AND LIFE IN CHRIST

Magazine

CAN

GOD

TELL

TIME?

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Editor's Update

It seems like only a few months ago that I wrote, "It is difficult to believe that we are entering our third year of publishing *FULFILLED! Magazine*," yet here we are entering our fourth year. We now distribute the magazine to over two thousand people and have readers around the world. Thanks to the generous donations of readers we are able to continue offering *FULFILLED!* free of charge. In order to be wise stewards of these limited funds (we are supported financially by fewer than 100 readers annually) we want to verify that everyone who is receiving *FULFILLED!* desires to remain on our mailing address. It is easy for someone to sign up for something that is free, lose interest, and then neglect to cancel their subscription. Everyone involved in producing *FULFILLED!*—financial donors, writers, editors, etc.—view this as a ministry to the Preterist community and as a vehicle for spreading the truth of Preterism. It is a blessing to be able to provide this ministry to the readers. However, we want to ensure that the magazine is going to those who are truly interested. Therefore, we are asking that you drop us a line sometime this year and let us know that you desire to continue receiving *FULFILLED!* You may email us, send a postcard, or leave a message on our phone (please speak slowly and clearly). We are not asking for money—we just want to know if you still desire to receive *FULFILLED!* At the year's end we will remove the names of those from whom we have not heard. This will ensure that we are being the best possible stewards of God's resources.

One of the results of our continually growing readership is the growing number of emails and letters to which I respond. I do my best to respond in a timely manner but I am continually getting further and further behind. This is due in part to the fact that I am currently juggling three major projects: producing the magazine; wrapping up the revision of my book *Behind the Veil of Moses*; and a video introduction to Preterism. My revised manuscript is at the printer so that project is just about finished, which will free up time for the magazine and video. Having never produced a video before I can't really say how close we are to

wrapping up that project. Every time I feel that we are getting close I realize that there is still much more to do. However, we are excited about the progress that has been made and look forward to being able to offer it to readers.

In addition to the above I still have my regular job, which consists of working four 12-hour days (or nights) in a row. When you add commute time to a 12-hour day there is not much time left for other activities (unfortunately, I'm not one of those people who can exist on 4-5 hours of sleep a night). This means that for a four-day stretch I may not even check my email, let alone answer it. So if you sent me an email and didn't hear back for almost a week it's not be-

cause I'm ignoring you. I just haven't caught up yet. Now if it's been 2-3 weeks and I haven't responded, your email is probably lost – not in cyberspace, but in my inbox or some other folder, and is slowly being buried under incoming mail. You might want to send me a reminder. The same is true for written letters except the time-frame is longer due to travel distances and times.

I don't say this to complain – this is a good problem to have. We still hear from Preterists who have little or no contact with other Preterists, and here I am struggling to keep up with everyone. Rather than com-

plaining, I'm simply hanging the following sign outside my office:



"Under Construction – Expect Delays"

The construction motif segues into the following Scripture: *Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it* (Ps 127:1). Our desire is that we are always co-laborers with Christ in His work, rather than asking Christ to be a co-laborer in *our* work. Regardless of how truthful and scriptural it may be to share the message of Preterism, we desire to do so in the time and manner He desires, and in a way which brings glory to His name. We appreciate your prayers for God's guidance and direction for Fulfilled Communications Group.

For Christ's Glory,

Brian

Mailbag



I've been a Preterist long before I ever heard the word. While in Viet Nam in 1968, serving with the US Army, my lifelong study of Scripture (I was thirty-years old) took on an entirely new direction. I began to take note of the imminency passages and realized that my view of "end times" had to change. As all Futurists, I had accepted the reality of the event while ignoring the time of the event. I am interested in all things Preterist, so I am anxious to read your writings.

Dan, Nevada

How refreshing to come across a fellow Preterist who has even started a magazine. Sign me up! I've been studying this stuff since I was 19 years old. I became a Christian at seventeen. So, I've been at this for awhile.

Eric, California

Fantastic! I've been looking for something like this for quite some time. I am involved in a full-time Christian radio ministry in Kansas and very much appreciate having access to such a fine periodical. I am very excited about every aspect of it. Thank you for all you do. Blessings,

Matthew, Kansas

I would like to start receiving Fulfilled Magazine. I've read your book *Behind the Veil of Moses* and it has made the Bible come more alive to me now than

any other time in my life. My next book to read is *The Parousia*. I bought both of these books at the Preterist Pilgrim Weekend. I've also read Don Preston's work, and I'm fascinated with what I have learned.

Thank you for your insight of the Scriptures.

Earl, Kansas

We have been reading several issues of your publication that a friend passed on to us. Please add us to your list of subscribers. I'm sure that many more requests will be coming in to you from our church family.

Joseph, New York

Great magazine—nothing like it over here.

Vanessa, South Africa

I recently received the latest issue of Fulfilled Magazine. The article in it written by Tim Martin and Jeff Vaughn was incredible. It was simply amazing how the theology of Covenant Creation goes hand in hand with Covenant Eschatology. I am thrilled that you are taking risks with your publication and not leaving any stone unturned. I hope that the Lord continues to bless this magazine and that readership continues to grow.

Robert, New York

HOW REFRESHING
TO COME ACROSS
A FELLOW
PRETERIST WHO
HAS EVEN
STARTED A
MAGAZINE. SIGN
ME UP!



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 N. Nisbett's *The Destruction of Jerusalem*, published in 1787.

Let us then proceed to consider those passages which have been thought to be ambiguous and of a doubtful interpretation. The first is Matthew 24:29: *Immediately after (or during) the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.* The parallel expressions in Mark are nearly the same; but those of St. Luke are less figurative, and of course will more easily admit of an application to the temporal calamities that were to come upon that generation. *And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves thereof roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken* (Luke 21:25).

The difficulty of applying these expressions to temporal calamities will, I apprehend, be removed by observing with Sir Isaac Newton, that in sacred prophecy, the darkening, smiting, or setting of the sun, moon and stars, is put for the ceasing of a kingdom, or for the desolation thereof, proportional to that darkness. And it is an observation of Dr. Warburton, which I am persuaded will give great pleasure to the reader, as it has done to myself, "that this language was borrowed from the ancient hieroglyphics: for as in hieroglyphic writing, the sun, moon, and stars were used to represent states and empires, kings, queens, and nobility; their eclipse and extinc-

tion, temporary disasters, or entire overthrow, etc. So in like manner, the holy prophets call kings and empires by the names of the heavenly luminaries; their misfortunes and overthrow are represented by eclipses and extinction; stars falling from the firmament are employed to denote the destruction of the nobility, etc. In a word, the prophetic style seems to be a speaking hieroglyphic. These observations will not only assist us in the study of the Old and New Testaments, but likewise vindicate their character from the illiterate cavils (quibbles) of modern libertines, who have foolishly mistaken *that* for the peculiar workmanship of the prophets' heated imagination, which was the sober, established language of their times, and which God and his Son condescended to employ as the proper conveyance of the high, mysterious ways of Providence in the revelation of themselves to mankind." Warburton's *Divine Legation*, vol. ii, book sect. 4.

A few passages from the prophetic writings of the Old Testament, evidently, and beyond all dispute, descriptive of temporal calamities, will sufficiently illustrate the observations of these great men, and put it out of doubt, that our blessed Lord had the ruin of the Jewish nation in view, in these highly figurative expressions.

I shall here transcribe them at full length, though I shall again have occasion to refer to them, when I come to examine into the Apostle's meaning, in those passages of the several epistles, which have been proposed for examination. The reader will then be able to see, and judge for himself, to what event to refer our

The Destruction of Jerusalem

Lord's language in the passage now before us. I add, that it may be well worth the reader's trouble to read over the whole of those chapters of the prophets, that he may be fully satisfied, they have temporal calamities only in view.

The first which I shall produce is from the prophet Isaiah, 13:10, relating to the destruction of Babylon, as appears from the beginning of the chapter. *The stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof, shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.* Still more remarkable is what the same prophet says of the destruction that was to come upon Idumea, 34:4. *All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their host shall fall down, as a leaf falleth off from the vine, and as falling fig from the fig tree.* Ezekiel, speaking of the ruin of Egypt, thus presses it, 32:7-8, *When I shall put thee out, I will cover the heavens, and make the stars thereof dark: I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord God.* I shall mention only one more passage to this purpose, from the prophet Joel, 2:30, as it is thought to relate to this very calamity, of the destruction of Jerusalem. *I will show wonders in the heavens, and in the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.*

After reading these remarkable prophecies of temporal calamities, it is hardly possible to entertain a doubt, that our Lord had a particular view to them in the passage under consideration, and that he applied it to the destruction that would soon overtake the Jewish nation. The preceding context requires that it should be restricted to that event, and it is afterwards declared our Savior, to be among the things that would come to pass in that generation. To the Jews this language was perfectly familiar and intelligible, though their mistaken notions, concerning the Messiah's kingdom, would not suffer them to apply it to themselves.

The Evangelist goes on in Matthew 24:30-31, in the same figurative style. *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the sign of the Son of man, coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory; and he shall send his angels* (or rather messengers, as the Greek word properly signifies, and is so translated in Mark 1, 2, and Luke vii, 14) *with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

It is clear from what has been already said, that the 29th verse relates to the destruction of Jerusalem; this appearance of the Son of Man, in the particular circumstances here described, must necessarily relate to the same event; for it is not only limited to the same period of time by the particle *then*, but is likewise, one of those things that was to come to pass in that generation. It is also to be observed, that it was a direct answer to the question of the disciples, "*What shall be the sign of thy coming?*" "The plain meaning of it is," says Bishop Newton, "that the destruction of Jerusalem will be such a remarkable instance of divine vengeance, such a signal manifestation of Christ's power and glory, that all the Jewish tribes shall mourn, and many will be led from thence to acknowledge Christ and the Christian religion. In the ancient prophets, God is frequently described as coming in the clouds, upon any remarkable interposition and manifestation of his power; and the same description is here applied to Christ. The destruction of Jerusalem will be as ample a manifestation of Christ's power and glory, as if he was himself to come visibly in the clouds of heaven." I shall only add, that the sign of the Son of Man is evidently that of which the prophet Daniel speaks: *I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him, and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people and nations should serve him.* (7:13-14) ❧



CREATION TO CO

Studies in Redemption

Gospel Preached to the Whole World (Matt 24:14)

All These Things Came to Pass (Part 3)

by Ed Stevens

When we began this study (see Vol. 3, Issue 2), we noted there are twelve texts within the Synoptic Apocalypse (Matt 24 and parallels) which Futurists claim were not fulfilled in AD 70. In the last issue we examined one of those texts (Matt 24:3) to show that it was fulfilled in the very manner Jesus predicted, and we listed citations from Josephus, Eusebius, and Yosippon as documentation. (Space constraints did not allow us to provide the reader with full quotes, so if you would like to read them without having to track them down, simply email me at preterist1@preterist.org and request the eText file “Historical References Printout.”).

The second text for which Futurists deny an AD 70 fulfillment is found in Matthew 24:14:

*This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in **the whole world** [Gk. *hole te oikoumene*] as a testimony to **all the nations** [Gk. *pasin tois ethnesin*], and then the end will come.*

Thomas Ice and other Futurists point out that all the nations in the whole world were not evangelized by AD 70. They reason that since the gospel was not preached to peoples living in places such as America and Australia before AD 70, the End of the Age could not have arrived then. However, were America and Australia intended to be included in Jesus’ prophecy? We need to look at the usage of these two phrases (“the whole world” and “all the nations”) in the rest of the New Testament to see if they refer to every ethnic group on the entire planet, or merely to the Roman world and the Diaspora of the first century. Note how these two phrases are used in the following passages (quotes are taken from the NASB95 unless otherwise noted):

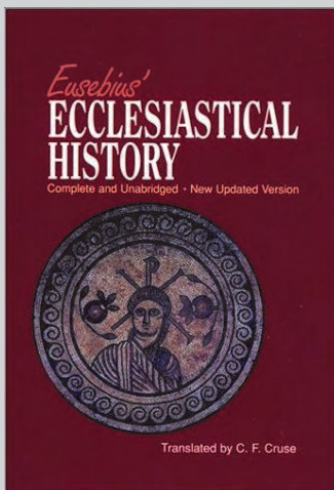
The whole world [Gk. *hole te oikoumene*] –

- . . . a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that **all the world** [Gk. *pasan ten oikoumenen*] should be registered. (Luke 2:1 ESV; cf. “whole Roman Empire” [AMP] and “whole empire” [HCSB])
- . . . Agabus, got up and predicted by the Spirit that a severe famine was **about to come over the whole inhabited world** [Gk. *holen ten oikoumenen*]. This took place during the reign of Claudius [AD 44]. (Acts 11:28 NET)

- . . . because He did set a day in which He is about to judge **the world** [Gk. *ten oikoumenen*] . . . (Acts 17:31 YLT)
- . . . the great goddess Artemis . . . she whom **all Asia and the world** [Gk. *hole Asia kai oikoumene*] worship.” (Acts 19:27 ESV)
- . . . a fellow who stirs up dissension among **all the Jews throughout the world** [Gk. *pasin tois Ioudaiois tois kata ten oikoumenen*]. (Acts 24:5)
- . . . their voice has gone out into **all the earth** [Gk. *pasan ten gen*], and their words to **the ends of the world** [Gk. *ta perata tes oikoumenes*].” (Rom 10:18)
- . . . I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is **about to come upon the whole world** [Gk. *mellouses erchesthai epi tes oikoumenes holes*]. (Rev 3:10)

All the nations [Gk. *pasin tois ethnesin*] –

- . . . and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into **all the nations** [Gk. *ta ethne panta*]; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. (Luke 21:24)
- Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from **every nation under heaven** [Gk. *pantos ethnous ton hupo ton ouranon*]. (Acts 2:5)
- . . . and they are instructed concerning thee, that apostasy from Moses thou dost teach to **all Jews among the nations** [Gk. *kata ta ethne pantas Ioudaious*], saying not to circumcise the children, nor after the customs to walk. (Acts 21:21 YLT)
- . . . but now is manifested, and . . . has been made known to **all the nations** [Gk. *panta ta ethne*], leading to obedience of faith. (Rom 16:26)
- By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, **proclaimed among the nations** [Gk. *ekeruxthe en ethnesin*], **believed on in the world** [Gk. *epesteuthe en kosmo*], taken up in glory. (1 Tim 3:16)
- . . . that through me the preaching might be fully assured, and **all the nations** [Gk. *panta ta ethne*] might hear, and I was freed out of the mouth of a lion. (2 Tim 4:17 YLT)



CONSUMMATION

Temptive History



Notice that the phrase “*the whole world*” (Luke 2:1) is translated “whole Roman empire” in the Amplified Bible and as “whole empire” in the Holman Christian Standard Bible. Futurist translators here admit that this phrase does not mean all individuals on the entire planet. The famine predicted in Acts 11:28, which occurred during the reign of Claudius, was not global, but restricted to mainly Palestine and Judea. In Acts 17:31, it is stated that Jesus was *about to judge* [Gk. *Mello*] the world [Gk. *Oikoumenen*]. If Futurists insist on a global interpretation of “world,” then they must demonstrate that a universal judgment of all men on the whole planet occurred shortly after Paul spoke these words. In Acts 19:27, the Ephesian silversmiths claimed that *the whole world* worshipped the goddess Artemis; but her religious influence was felt only in Mediterranean and Near Eastern regions. In Acts 24:5, Paul was accused of having stirred up dissension among *all Jews throughout the world*, but we only know of his travels in Palestine, Turkey, Greece, and Italy (the Roman world or Diaspora). In Romans 10:18, Paul claims that the gospel had already gone out to *the ends of the world* at the time he wrote (AD 58). In Christ’s letter to the church at Philadelphia (Rev 3:10) Jesus reveals that He would keep them safe *from the hour of testing* (that is, the Neronic persecution) which was *about to come* [Gk. *Mello*] *upon the whole world* (in AD 64-65). The Neronic persecution did not reach all the way to America and Australia, but it did affect the Roman world.

The phrase “*all the nations*” as used in the texts listed above is also very revealing. In Luke’s parallel account of the Synoptic Apocalypse Jesus said that the Jews would be led captive into *all the nations* (Luke 21:24). Did the Romans take them to Australia and America? Or is it referring only to those nations within the Roman sphere of influence? Likewise, on the day of Pentecost we are told there were Jews in Jerusalem from *every nation under heaven* (Acts 2:5). The list of nations (Acts 2:9-11) from which they originated included the Near East (Persia) and all the nations on the Mediterranean Rim. Nothing is said about Australia or America. Paul claimed that the gospel had been made known to *all the nations* in the first century (Rom 16:26). Did his *all nations* include Australia and America? In Paul’s last epistle, written just before he died in the Neronic persecution (AD 64-65), Paul stated that, as a result of his trial before the Roman court, *all the nations* had heard the gospel (2 Tim 4:17). Were there representatives from America and Australia in the courtroom?

Furthermore, other similar New Testament texts explicitly claim that the gospel had been preached to all the nations

in the whole world before the end of the Jewish Age (AD 70). Although these additional texts do not use the same Greek word for “world” [Gk. *Oikoumene*], the same thought is implied. Notice that Paul writes to those at Colossae that the gospel had already been proclaimed in *all creation under heaven* (Col 1:23; Gk. *pase ktisei hupo ouranon*), and the gospel was already bearing fruit in *all the world* (Col 1:6; Gk. *panti to kosmo*). Paul also informed the Christians in Rome that news about their faith had spread throughout *the whole world* (Rom 1:8; Gk. *holo to kosmo*). Did folks in Australia or America hear about the faith of the Roman Christians?

We have seen that the two phrases (“the whole world” and “all the nations”), as used throughout the New Testament, are clearly referring to the Roman world and the Diaspora of the first century. Therefore, despite the objections of Futurists, it is conclusive that Matthew 24:14 must have been fulfilled by AD 70. The fourth-century church historian Eusebius also affirmed that the gospel had spread throughout “the whole world” in the first century, and there is not the slightest implication that America or Australia were included:

Thus, under the influence of heavenly power, and with the divine cooperation, the doctrine of the Savior, like the rays of the sun, quickly illumined **the whole world** [Gk. *sumpasan oikoumenen*]; and straightway, in accordance with the divine Scriptures, the voice of the inspired evangelists and apostles went forth through **all the earth** [Gk. *pasan ten gen*], and their words to the **end of the world** [Gk. *perata tes oikoumenes*]. (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book 2, Ch 3:1, cf. Rom 10:18)

(Every Bible student should have a copy of Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History*, which is a treasure of historical information about the first three centuries of Christianity. It can be ordered from our website at www.preterist.org.) X

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OBJECTION OVERRULED

ONE DAY IS WITH THE LORD AS A THOUSAND YEARS, OR, CAN GOD TELL TIME?

Don K. Preston

Objection: "Since Peter's statement 'a day with the Lord is as a thousand years' is in reference to the timing of Christ's return, we should not expect Second Coming time statements such as 'near, at hand,' or 'shortly' to be interpreted by man's understanding, but by God's. Thus, from His perspective, only two days have passed since the New Testament claimed that the return of Christ was 'at hand.'"

Without doubt, this is the most common objection offered to mitigate the multitudinous New Testament statements indicating that Christ's coming was to occur in the first century. Based on Peter's statement, all Futurists claim that prophetic time statements are supposedly "elastic," "ambiguous" and "relative." However, we will show that an appeal to 2 Peter 3, in an attempt to mitigate the time statements of the nearness of the end is misguided and false. Let me make several observations.¹

- The objection is an admission that the words of the New Testament, taken at face value, do indicate imminence. We have a right, therefore, to ask, if God had wanted to indicate that the Parousia truly was near, what other words could He have used, other than, "Behold, I come quickly"?
- A presuppositional concept of the "nature" of the Parousia is the reason attempts are made to negate the "when" of the Parousia. In other words, the objectors believe in a visible, bodily coming of Christ on cumulus clouds. The New Testament writers said Christ's coming was "near." That literal event did not occur within a first-century "near" time span, therefore, "near" cannot mean "near!" This presuppositional approach is invalid.
- The words "at hand," "quickly," etc., are not the only terms of imminence that are used, and these other terms cannot be stretched like theological silly putty. For instance, Paul said, "*the end of the ages has come upon us*" (1 Cor 10:11). Peter said, "*the (appointed) time has come for (the) judgment to begin*" (1 Pet 4:17). John said, "*It is the last hour*" (1 John 2:18). These statements are of a different nature than "at hand" or "near." They are expressions of a then present reality, not ambiguity.

- Did you know that the Bible gives examples of God condemning "prophets" for making false time statements? He actually killed one prophet for making a false time prediction (Jeremiah 27-28)! Doesn't that indicate that God can tell time pretty well, and that He expects man to honor His time statements? (See especially Ezekiel 7-12, where God said the judgment on Jerusalem was "at hand," "nigh," and "coming soon." The false prophets said it was far off. God condemned them and said that when He said something was near, it would occur in that generation! God can not only tell time, He communicated truthfully about time.)

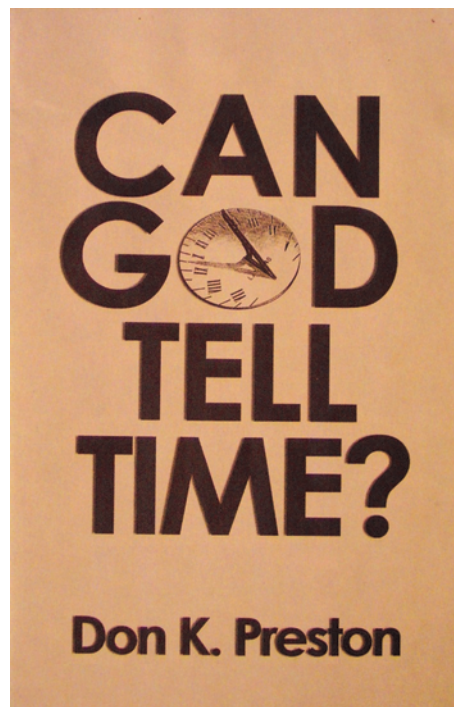
Peter's second epistle was written to refute the scoffers (2 Pet 1:16f). Peter reminds his readers of what the Old Covenant prophets said, of what Jesus and the other apostles said, and, of what he had written in his first epistle (2 Peter 3:1-2). Consider then the following:

The Old Covenant prophets said that *when the last days arrived*, the Day of the Lord would be near (Joel 3:1-14; Isa 60:22). Peter said he was living in those predicted last days (1 Pet 1:20), and the end had drawn near.

Jesus said that His coming in judgment would be in the first century: *there are some standing here that shall not taste of death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom* (Matt 16:27-28).² He likewise said it would, without fail, be in His generation (Matt 24:34). There is no way to turn "some standing here" and "this generation" into a timeless, elastic ambiguousness.

In his first epistle, Peter affirmed that Christ was "ready" (from *hetoimos*, a strong word of imminence) to judge the living and the dead" (1 Pet 4:5). He said *the end of all things has drawn near* (1 Pet 4:7), and, again, *the time has come for judgment to begin* (1 Pet 4:17). Furthermore, Peter said that the Old Prophets were told that fulfillment was *not near* in their day, but, was near in his day (1 Pet 1:10f). The attempt to make time language elastic nullifies this temporal contrast between the Old Prophets and Peter's day. Peter is emphatic that the Old Covenant prophets spoke of his "these days" (Acts 3:24f).

Peter also wrote, *the end of all things has drawn near* (1 Pet 4:7). The scoffers said *all things continue as they were* (2 Pet 3:4). The scoffers were denying what Peter affirmed! Are we to suppose that the point of 2 Peter 3 was for Peter to say, "*I know that I have said*



eschatology
PROPHECY RESEARCH

OBJECTION: RULED!



the end has drawn near, but, you have to understand that

I did not mean that! After all, time statements don't mean anything!" The objection offered to the time statements actually makes the scoffers out to be the ones who had it right!

Also, if the preaching of the nearness of the end by Jesus' disciples included the (supposed) fact that "at hand" did not mean soon, then the scoffers were making an empty objection. They clearly thought that the language meant something! Their objection could only have merit if the message of the nearness of the end was being taken seriously as a limited time for fulfillment.

How would Peter's (supposed) appeal to the meaninglessness of language *refute the scoffers*? In other words, if Peter was affirming that in reality the Parousia might be delayed indefinitely, he had not refuted the scoffers. Leithart agrees: "Indefinite delay of the Parousia would be a feeble response to false teachers who are teaching that the Parousia will be delayed indefinitely!"³ Was Peter actually telling his audience that the scoffers were right, and that his own predictions of the nearness of the end meant *nothing*, and that the Parousia might, after all, be delayed for thousands of years?

Consider 2 Peter 3 in light of the Olivet Discourse. In Matthew 24:32, after giving a list of the signs of the end, Jesus told His apostles, "*When you see all of these things know that it (His Parousia and kingdom) is nigh, even at the door.*" So, the appearance of the signs would indicate *the nearness of the end*. But, what did Jesus mean by "nigh" and, "at the door"?⁴ If time statements mean nothing, then the signs would mean nothing! How could they know it *is near, even at the door* via the appearance of signs, if near means nothing! Now watch.

Jesus warned those same apostles, *Many will come in my name saying, "I am he" and, "the end has drawn near." Do not go after them* (Luke 21:8). Please catch the power of what Jesus said!

- Jesus said the appearance of the signs would prove that the end was near.
- Jesus said not to believe—and thus, not to make—premature declarations of the nearness of the end.
- Peter was one of the disciples present who heard Jesus' warnings.
- Peter said "the end of all things has drawn near"! (John likewise affirmed the nearness of the end: 1 John 2:18)!

Those who offer the objection above have a severe problem in light of Luke 21. Did Peter see the signs of the end or not? Well, one of the signs was the completion of the world mission, and Paul most assuredly affirmed the fulfillment of that sign (Col 1:5f; 23).⁵

Peter used almost the precise words that Jesus said the false prophets would use! Was Peter's declaration of the nearness of the end

premature? If so, *then Peter became one of the very false prophets that Jesus had warned him about!*

Question: Do those who offer the objection above believe that the appearance of the signs would be proof of the objective nearness of the end? Yes, they do!⁶ So, on the one hand we are told that the very disciples whom Jesus warned of premature declarations of the end, *actually made false declarations of the end*. Or, we are told that *their* time statements don't really mean "at hand." On the other hand, we are told that the signs of the end are present today, and that these signs actually mean the end is now "at hand." Time statements mean something *now*, but not from the pen of the inspired apostles! This is a severe problem for those offering the objection from 2 Peter 3.

Now, if the objection under consideration is valid, Jesus could not have warned against premature declarations of the nearness of the end, because time statements were not to be believed anyway! In other words, if it was understood that time statements of the end meant nothing, why would Jesus warn against anyone making time statements about the end? Let them say what they wanted! The problem of course, is that Jesus *did* condemn false predictions of the nearness of the end!

John said to test the spirits (1 John 4:1f), whether they be of God. But, if time statements do not mean anything, then there could be no testing of the prophets, for their time statements would not be subject to testing.⁷ You see, if time statements of the end mean nothing objective, then Jesus' warnings to reject false predictions concerning the end are empty words, meaning nothing.

But of course, Jesus' words do mean something. They mean that only His personal disciples were the ones best qualified (inspired) to make objective true statements about the nearness of the end. Since Jesus told His apostles to reject premature declarations of the end, that means that those making such predictions prior to the apostles were, by the very nature of the case, false.

This likewise means that anyone centuries *after* the apostles, making predictions of the end, would be (are!) false, since Jesus said *they* (the first-century apostles) would see the signs, and *they* would know when the end was truly near. Thus, *they* would truly declare the nearness of the end. And of course, this is precisely what happened!

Paul condemned Hymenaeus for making statements that the

cont. on page 14

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Chronotology

CHRONOTOLOGY

An Excursus on Time as It Relates to the Events of the Parousia of Christ at AD 70

Whatever is has been already, and whatever is to come has been already, and God summons each event back in its turn.” (Ecc 3:15 NEB)

When attempting to witness to another believer about Christ’s AD 70 Second Coming, how many times have you received a response similar to the following: “Look, there’s no way that Christ could have come back already because the Bible says that when Christ returns there will be a rapture, a resurrection, and a judgment! Clearly, these things have not happened yet, so Christ has not returned!”

Usually, when encountering a response like this, we tend to be caught a little off guard. How do we respond to an objection such as this? Often, we will review various biblical “time texts” which clearly demonstrate that Christ and the New Testament writers taught the Second Coming would occur before the close of their own first-century generation. As correct as this type of response is, there nevertheless remains the nagging question in the back of our minds, “How did these events take place during Christ’s first-century return?” The following passages demonstrate that the Bible regards these events as co-terminus with the AD 70 Parousia:

The General Resurrection: *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ, all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that, those who are Christ’s at His coming.* (1 Cor 15:22-23 NASB; cf. 1 Thess 4:15-17, Matt 24:30-31)

The Judgment: *For the Son of Man is about to (Gk. mello) come in the glory of His Father, and will then repay every man according to his deeds.* (Matt 16:27 NASB; cf. 2 Tim 4:1, Matt 25:31-33)

The purpose of this article is to begin to equip the Preterist believer with some biblical ammunition in order to counter the above objections. The Bible clearly teaches that the resurrection and judgment were to take place at the Parousia of Christ. If the Parousia did in fact take place in AD 70, these events must have taken place as well. The question is, “What was the nature of these events and how do we give a biblical explanation as to their occurrence at the Parousia in the first century?”

Space here is limited, so I will briefly give three points as to how we can know that these events (that

is, the General Resurrection and Judgment) have already occurred, even though they were not necessarily “seen” as occurring within the space of linear time on earth. “Time” is the issue at hand, and knowing what the Bible teaches concerning time and its purposes will open up a whole new window for the Preterist who seeks to give a biblical answer to these questions.

The When and Why of Time: Its Origin and Purposes

Recall the quote from Ecclesiastes at the beginning of our article: “*Whatever is has been already . . .*” Whatever occurs within the scope, duration, and limitation of linear time is not limited to its historical occurrence alone. In the mind and purposes of God, time folds in and upon itself in cascading purposes to effect His preordained intentions throughout history. God exists outside of time and is not bound by the tick-tock of the clock. All events originate with God, and even those which we have not experienced have “been already” in the mind of God.

Ecclesiastes continues: “. . . and whatever is to come has been already . . .” Time and the events of history are not cyclical. The passage of time is not to be conceived in a Gnostic/pagan manner of cyclic repetition where events continue to simply cycle back over against themselves without any seeming end or conclusion. Rather, in the mind of God, “whatever is to come has been already.” Because events occur within the Eternal Now of God, events which occur within the limitations of earth-bound time do not bind or limit God as they do us, because He exists outside of created time. Therefore, God can say:

Whatever is has been already, and whatever is to come has been already.

Since an event recorded in history is “witnessed” by the physical manifestation of its occurrence in earthly time, that event can be said to have been “seen,” “understood,” or “known” to have really occurred. This underlies the problem that the Resurrection and Judgment objector has as it relates to the “no verification in historical time” remark. Can an event such as the Parousia, which had the destruction of the temple/Jerusalem as its historical/physical time “marker,” actually be the Second Coming with all of its attending events like the Resurrection and Judgment? Can we understand the Resurrection and Judgment to have occurred in the Eternal Now of God, but outside of linear time? Do they then maintain their “factuality” as having truly occurred?

The answer is “yes,” because their reality exists in

*Dr. Kelly Birks pre
time and its
the Resurrection at*

By Dr. Kelly Nelson Birks



God's presence, in the spiritual realm, which is the reality from which all physical life and history flows in the first place. *Whatever is has been already, and whatever is to come has been already . . . AND GOD SUMMONS EACH EVENT BACK IN ITS TURN.*

The writer is not saying that history repeats itself in a reinitiating of the same occurrences again and again. Rather, in the timeless arena of God's existence the event becomes the experience of all who are liberated from the time-bound existence of the creation, and are thus experienced by all who enter that realm. What I am suggesting to the reader is that when we are liberated from this time-bound existence through physical death, we all experience this event of Parousia/Resurrection/Judgment—simultaneously. Thus is fulfilled the scriptural teaching of a shared experience for all of the church which takes place outside of created time.

Let me explain how this occurred. Time is a created thing. As expressed in Genesis 1, time was created "*In the beginning*" when God created all things physical and spiritual. Before the event of creation there was no "time." Simply stated, time cannot exist where it cannot be measured. To put it another way, if there exists no means by which time can be measured, then time has no referent as

an experiential action. According to Genesis, *time begins with the creation of that which measures it.* In Genesis 1:2-5, God brings light into the formlessness of the creation and separates the light from the darkness. Then comes the refrain which occurs six times in the Genesis creation narrative: "*And the evening*

and the morning were the first day" (Gen 1:5 KJV). No matter what one's views are regarding the cosmology of these statements, it is clear that an evening and a morning are a measurement of time. That which constitutes an evening or a morning requires the understanding of an elapsing or a measurement of time. Without such a means of measurement, time cannot be expressed or understood.

On day four of creation, we have the sun, moon, and stars presented to us with the caveat that one of their purposes for existence is to denote and mark out "seasons, days, and years" (Gen 1:14). It is here in the narrative that the calendar is born. If the means to measure time were not in existence, then time could not exist since it requires a factor of measurement in order to give it meaning. No measurement, no existence. There are no clocks in heaven. God's heaven is outside of the created elements discussed in Genesis 1.

As to the events that are concurrent with Christ's AD 70 Parousia, they did in fact occur and they occurred precisely in the only place where they could have—in the existence of the Eternal Now of God's heavenly, or spiritual, realm. For man, who is bound by time on earth, God

does as He says in Ecclesiastes 3:15—He summons each event back in its turn. That is, God is expressing the inexpressible to us from His vantage point of experiential occurrence, relative to time-bound events.

Ask your Futurist friend if he or she can produce a passage of Scripture that either teaches or implies that the events of Resurrection or Judgment are to take place *on earth*.

The Boundary of Time: Creation Only

The writer of Ecclesiastes tells us that time functions as that which is expressed by the recurrent phrase "under heaven" or "under the sun." By using these terms, the author of Ecclesiastes is expressing what life is like without God's influence by propositional revelation to those "under heaven" or "under the sun." This is that which is outside of heaven or God's influence propositionally. I have stated previously that there are no clocks in heaven. Time is a created dimension that did not exist prior to the Creation event.

Louis Berkhof, in his *Systematic Theology*, said this about time:

Technically speaking, it is not correct to assume that time was already in existence when God created the world, and that he at some point in that existing time, called 'the beginning,' brought forth the universe. Time is only one of the forms of created existence, and therefore could not exist before creation. For that reason Augustine thought it would be more correct to say that the world was created with time than to assert that it was created in time. (Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996 edition], Book 2, p. 130)

The Absence of Time: The Heavenly/Spiritual Realm

God is unaffected by time and yet directs all human experiences of time. The Bible teaches that God is an eternal being and that He extends Himself to our comprehension from the vantage point of what we loosely refer to as His "Eternal Now." When the Bible speaks of God's "eternality," it is expressed to us in passages like the following:

Before the mountains were born or you gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, you are God. (Ps 90:2 NASB)

The words "from everlasting to everlasting"

... IF THERE
EXISTS NO
MEANS BY
WHICH TIME
CAN BE
MEASURED,
THEN TIME
HAS NO
REFERENT AS
AN
EXPERIENTIAL
ACTION



Chronotology (from p. 13)

speak of God's "outside-of-time" existence. Everlasting does not mean unending time. We must reject this traditional error. Eternity is the realm about which Ecclesiastes 3:15 is talking. It is the realm in which Christ gathered His elect at His Parousia (Matt 24:31). And since it is a timeless realm, all of the elect—past, present, and future—met Him in that realm. *You met Him in that realm.* You met Christ in that realm in God's Eternal Now, and in that realm, you will be meeting Christ upon your physical death (in your future experience). Time collapses around us in the Eternal Now of His presence. Christ gave us historical and linear clues in His Sermon on the Mount as to what to look for on earth when the events of the Parousia would take place. To force God's non-time events to exist within the same realm of our space-time continuum is to make the text of Scripture serve *us* rather than *us* serving the text of Scripture.

Remember, all the doubter has to do is present one legitimate text of Scripture that says that the events of Judgment and Resurrection occur in the time-bound realm. A response such as, "Well, where else would it occur?" is only evading the issue.

For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it passes by, or as a watch in the night.
(Ps 90:4 NASB)

Once the previous verse (v. 2) is understood relative to God's Eternal Now (everlasting), then the lights go on as to the meaning of the oft-quoted (and *misquoted* or *misapplied*) Psalm 90:4 (cf. 2 Pet 3:8).

How is the unfathomable God to express to us "insects" the incomprehensible truth of His timeless realm? Answer: to assert to us His eternity (everlasting to everlasting) and to place it within a framework of a *long* and *short* experiential explanation.

Did yesterday seem to you like a thousand years? It did to God. How about last night? Did that seem like a thousand years to you? Since none of us have lived long enough to know what a thousand years feels like, we cannot relate to the concept of God's eternity without simply taking the teachings of Scripture by faith in these matters; and without faith, it is impossible to please Him (Heb 11:6).

There is no text that states that, when Christ returns, anyone would see Him physically. In Acts 1:9-11, the angels tell the disciples that Christ would return in the same manner as they saw him go into heaven. Verse 9 says that this manner would be "in a cloud, out of their sight." OUT OF THEIR SIGHT. In Matthew 24:30, Christ tells us that what men in our arena of time would see would not be His physical presence, but "(the) SIGN of the Son of Man in heaven." His sign would appear, but it would be a heavenly sign generated from and understood from heaven in a timeless realm. (The destruction of the temple was the physical sign of the Parousia in earthly time.) Next, Christ states that what would be seen would be

"the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt 24:30). Coming on the clouds? How did the angels in Acts 1 describe the event of Christ's Parousia to the disciples? In a cloud, out of their sight (Acts 1:9-11). Every cloud-coming in Scripture points us to the idea of divinity (Exod 13:21; Ps 97:2; Ps 104:3; Isa 19:1; Joel 2:2; Matt 24:30; 26:64; 1 Thess 4:17; Rev 1:7).

There is also no text in Scripture that says that either the Resurrection of the Dead or the Judgment would occur *on* earth. In fact, if the judgment were to occur on earth, it would probably take thousands of linear earth years to accomplish, as it would necessitate the binding of that event to time, for that is what rules this system.

In Luke 4:5, the so-called temptation in the wilderness of Jesus, we are told that Satan "*led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.*" In the Greek, "to lead up" is *anagago*. *Ana* means "up" and *go* (or *gago*) is to lead. The question is, "lead Christ up to what?" Into a moment of time (Gk. *stigma* means a moment or an "instant of time"). Where the devil "took" Christ was outside of our time dimension. This event did not take place in historic linear history relative to Christ's experience. Rather it was in an instant of time. There was a momentary lapse, or hole, in the fabric of time where such an occurrence could take place.

Ephesians 2:2 says that Satan was the Prince and power of the air (Gk. *aer*). Not "air" as in the sky above and where the birds fly and rain descends. The word *aer* means the internal arena of man's experience (see Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 1, pp. 163-4, and *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, Greek Dictionary, entry #109). The *aer* is man's spiritual realm. That inner arena of man. The spiritual arena.

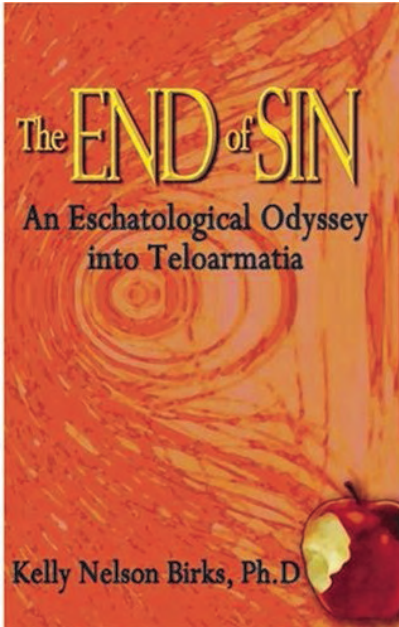
All I can hope to accomplish in this short article is to give the reader a taste of what it means to live in and outside of time as God sees and experiences it relative to the events of AD 70. I am planning a book on this subject that will elaborate and explain in greater detail what I have only been able to introduce briefly in this article.

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*"A mind once stretched by a new idea
never regains its original dimension."*

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.



DOES THE PRETERIST VIEW HAVE A CONCLUSION?

That is, where is the Preterist hermeneutic taking us as God, through Christ, narrows down history as it progresses forward into a consummation that is unique to the Preterist understanding? In his book, “The End of Sin: An Eschatological Odyssey into Teloarmatia,” Dr. Birks addresses the biblical issues surrounding the wrapping up of God’s soteriological program for the nations of the world. How does the Preterist view of the resurrection of the dead play into all of this and where will it take us? This book seeks to give an answer to those questions.

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Jesus said, “till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled” (Matt 5:18).

How did His Jewish audience understand “heaven and earth”?

... for if any one do but consider the fabric of the tabernacle, and take a view of the garments of the high priest, and of those vessels which we make use of in our sacred ministration, he will find that our legislator was a divine man, and that we are unjustly reproached by others; for if any one do without prejudice, and with judgment, look upon these things, he will find they were every one made in way of imitation and representation of the universe. When Moses distinguished the tabernacle into three parts, and allowed two of them to the priests, as a place accessible and common, he denoted the land and the sea, these being of general access to all; but he set apart the third division for God, because heaven is inaccessible to men. And when he ordered twelve loaves to be set on the table, he denoted the year, as distinguished into so many months. By branching out the candlestick into seventy parts, he secretly intimated the Decani, or seventy divisions of the planets; and as to the seven lamps upon the candlesticks, they referred to the course of the planets, of which that is the number. The veils, too, which were composed of four things, they declared the four elements; for the fine linen was proper to signify the earth, because the flax grows out of the earth; the purple signified the sea, because that color is dyed by the blood of a sea shell-fish; the blue is fit to signify the air; and the scarlet will naturally be an indication of fire. Now the vestment of the high priest being made of linen, signified the earth; the blue denoted the sky, being like lightning in its pomegranates, and in the noise of the bells resembling thunder. And for the ephod, it showed that God had made the universe of four elements; and as for the gold interwoven, I suppose it related to the splendor by which all things are enlightened. He also appointed the breastplate to be placed in the middle of the ephod, to resemble the earth, for that has the very middle place of the world. And the girdle which encompassed the high priest round, signified the ocean, for that goes round about and includes the universe. Each of the sardonyxes declares to us the sun and the moon; those, I mean, that were in the nature of buttons on the high priest’s shoulders. And for the twelve stones, whether we understand by them the months, or whether we understand the like number of the signs of that circle which the Greeks call the Zodiac, we shall not be mistaken in their meaning. And for the mitre, which was of a blue color, it seems to me to mean heaven; for how otherwise could the name of God be inscribed upon it? That it was also illustrated with a crown, and that of gold also, is because of that splendor with which God is pleased. (Josephus—*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 3, Chapter 7)



Objection Overruled! (from p. 9)

end had come—precisely what Jesus had forewarned in Matthew 24:26. Yet not many years later Peter wrote that the end had drawn near; James wrote that the judge was right at the door; Paul wrote that the end of the ages had arrived; and John wrote that it was the last hour and that the Father revealed to him Christ's Parousia was coming quickly (Rev 22).

The bottom line is that when Peter made his statement in 2 Peter 3, he was not saying that the scoffers were right, and that the Parousia had been delayed indefinitely. *He was not discounting his own statements of the nearness of the end!* He was affirming the faithfulness of God, to keep His promises. The passing of time, whether long or short, did not cause Him to fail. It meant that if He said something was near, it was near. If He said something was not near, it was not near.⁸ Peter was affirming that the passing of time did not prevent God from keeping His promises *on time!*

So much more could be said about 2 Peter 3:9,⁹ but we have seen enough here to definitively declare: Objection Overruled!

¹ We clearly do not have the space to consider all that might be said in response to this objection. However, I have addressed the objection in-depth in my *Can God Tell Time?*, as well as in my *Who Is This Babylon?*. The *Babylon* book has one of the most extensive discussions of the time statements of Scripture to be found anywhere. Also, in my upcoming book on 1 Thessalonians 4, I have an even more extensive, and *additional*, discussion of the time statements. My books are available at www.eschatology.org.

² For an in-depth analysis of Matthew 16:27-28, see my book *Can You Believe Jesus Said This?*

³ Peter Leithart, *The Promise of His Coming*, (Moscow, ID, Canon Press, 2004) p. 67

⁴ Compare Jesus' words with James' declaration "the judge is standing right at the door" immediately after declaring "the parousia has drawn near" (James 5:8-9). James' words are a direct echo of Jesus' Discourse. Was James guilty of making premature declarations of the nearness of the end?

⁵ For an in-depth demonstration of the fulfillment of the Great Commission in the first century, see my *Into All The World, Then Comes The End*.

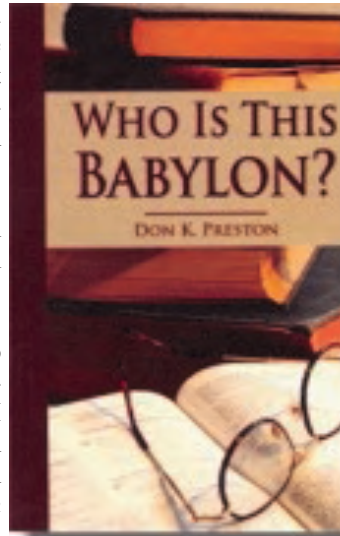
⁶ As an example of this kind of inconsistency, see my written debate with dispensationalist Lloyd Olsen. He argued vehemently that the time statements of the nearness of the end in the New Testament are meaningless, but, that we are seeing the signs around us everywhere today that prove the end is actually near! My question to him—never answered—was why we should accept his statements that the end is near now, when the inspired biblical writers said it was near in the first century? Why does "at hand" mean "soon" now, but it meant nothing when Paul, Peter, and John said it? The debate is on my website: www.eschatology.org.

⁷ Of course, history provides *prima facie* proof of false prophets, and their premature declarations of the nearness of the end. Edgar Whisenant said the end would be in 1988, and, that failing, 1989. Hal Lindsay said the rapture and end would be in 1988. Tim La-Haye, Thomas Ice, Jack Van Impe, and John Hagee are all on record as saying that the restoration of Israel in 1948 is the singular greatest sign of the end, and that the generation to see the signs must be the generation of the end. I watched Grant Jeffrey on TBN, (1-14-09), say that our's is the generation that will witness the coming of the Lord, based on the restoration of Israel in 1948. Of course, from 1948 to the present is stretching "this generation"

to its limit, and these men join the ranks of those guilty of making false predictions.

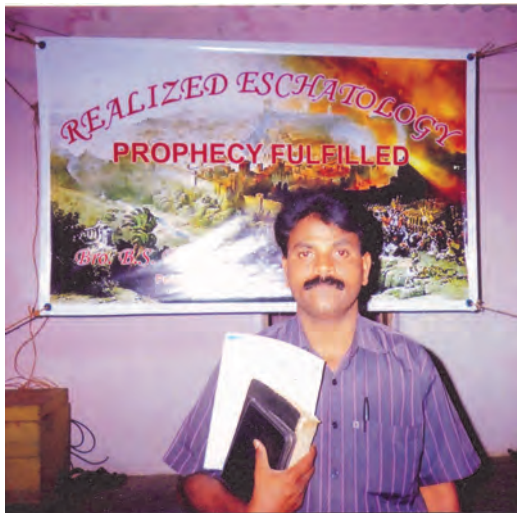
⁸ It seems not to have dawned on those offering the objection to ask: If "at hand" can (virtually *must*) mean a long time, then what does it mean when God said something was "not at hand"? There are many examples (See my *Can God Tell Time?*) in which God said something was not near! Does this mean that He actually meant it was near? Do we really want to turn language on its head by this approach to 2 Peter 3?

⁹ I also have a lengthy discussion of 2 Peter 3:9 in my book *The Elements Shall Melt With Fervent Heat*. I note that Peter was reminding his audience of God's faithfulness to keep His Old Testament promises to *Israel*. This is why he quotes from Psalm 90 in the first place. I have yet to encounter anyone who offered the objection above who had considered this crucial fact. X



BUT OF
COURSE,
JESUS'
WORDS DO
MEAN
SOMETHING

B.S. Raju uses many methods to share the truth of Preterism in Bangalore, India, including an annual seminar. For more information about his ministry, email him at: raju_preterist@rediffmail.com



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FULFILLED MAGAZINE

Prophecy Quiz

As Jesus travelled with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, when they approached the disciple's destination Jesus indicated that He was going to continue on. The disciples constrained Him, saying:

"Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them. (Luke 24:29 NKJV)

By saying that *the day is far spent*, the disciples meant:

- A. There were still many hours of daylight left in which to travel.
- B. The night was certainly going to come, but there is really no indication as to how far away it was.
- C. The sun was about to set (or had set) and the day was nearly over.

Only by torturing the plain meaning of the words *the day is far spent* can we arrive at any answer but "C." If we would never do such a disservice to those words in the above passage, is there any reason to do so to similar words in the following passage?

... for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is hand. (Rom 13:11-12)

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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