

FULFILLED! *Magazine*

PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS OF FULFILLED PROPHECY AND LIFE IN CHRIST

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**Is this your
final issue
of Fulfilled?
(see p.2)**



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Editor's Update

As the cover indicates, this will be the last issue for many of those on our mailing list. This past year we have been asking those who wish to continue receiving *Fulfilled!* Magazine to contact us and express their desire to remain on our mailing list. Judging by some of the recent requests we've received, it appears that many people skip the "Editor's Update" and go directly to the articles. Thus, they were not aware that they needed to express their desire to remain on the list. That's why I chose to put "Final Issue?" on the cover—I figure that everyone looks at the cover!

At the same time that we will be saying goodbye to a number of former readers, we are welcoming many new readers—most likely as a result of having watched our video "You've Gotta Be Kidding . . . Right?" Those of you new to Preterism will find that, just as there are a variety of Futurist views (pre-, mid-, post-trib, etc.), so there are a variety of views within Preterism. We strive to provide both support for the basic premise of Preterism (past fulfillment) as well as a variety of perspectives on the finer details within Preterism, with the latter being one of the most appreciated features of *Fulfilled!*. Our goal is not to tell you what to think, but to give you something to think about. If you are new to Preterism, whether you think it has some merit or are still saying to yourself, "You've gotta be kidding," we hope that you find something in these pages that challenges you to dig deeper in God's Word. Most of all, we hope that you find these pages Christ-centered and Christ-honoring.

The response to our video has been nothing short of phenomenal! We originally had 1,000 copies produced and those were gone in the first three weeks. We had to tell customers that we were back-ordered while we waited for our second order of 1,000 to arrive. Our intent was to produce a tool for introducing Preterism to others, and to be able to price it in a manner conducive to giving away copies. The numerous comments and reviews we have received confirm that we achieved our goals. Preterists have been buying copies by the dozens. We originally had pricing levels for single copies, 5-pack, and 10-pack orders. However, after receiving orders for multiple 10-packs, and inquiries for even greater bulk orders, we added 25-pack (\$60) and 45-pack (\$100) bulk orders.

Other Preterists are making their own copies

for distribution (see the opening screen of the video for authorization details) and posting the video online. We also have finally posted the entire video, divided into chapters, on our website, www.FulfilledCG.com, along with a number of reviews. Perhaps even more encouraging than the responses from Preterists are the responses from Futurists who have watched the video. One Futurist was shocked to learn that the gospel had been preached in all the world during the New Testament generation. Another, formerly very unreceptive of Preterism, was said to have been very quiet and subdued, troubled by Matthew 16:27-28 (*some of you standing here . . .*). One Preterist showed the video to a mixed group of Preterists and Amillennial and Dispensational Futurists. By the end of the video all were either Full-Preterists, or Partial-Preterists open to Full-Preterism! If you have a similar story you'd like to share, please send me an email or write us a letter (see the contact info in the left sidebar).

Please understand that FCG is not taking credit for having "converted" anyone to Preterism. We realize that many of you have been planting, watering, and cultivating "Preterist seeds" for years—perhaps even decades. If God sees fit to allow FCG to play a small role in this process, or to be a part of the "harvest," we are humbled by that honor and recognize both the labors of others and the fact that it is God Who gives the increase.

Many readers (and viewers) have recently sent us names which they would like us to add to our mailing list. Naturally, we want to see others exposed to the truth of Preterism. However, we must balance this desire with the desire to respect the privacy of those who have not directly requested to receive the magazine. Many of the names we have received are individuals whom we were requested to add previously; however, these individuals have not contacted us to remain on our mailing list. Similarly, others have contacted us to be removed from the list. The last thing FCG wants to do is disrespect the privacy of others, or come across as too aggressive—a *brother offended is harder to win than a strong city* (Pro 18:19). Also, it takes time for us to look up these names, only to find that they have either not expressed an interest in remaining on the



Mailbag

I want to renew my free subscription of your magazine *Fulfilled!* Please continue sending them to me, I enjoy reading them. They contain a lot of spiritual meat. They are really valuable sources of spiritual information and my learning is greatly enriched.

Apo, Philippines

To all the FCG family: Your newsletter is a blessing, we receive it gladly. Keep it coming . . . Our prayers are with you.

R & P, North Caroline

Thanks so much for adding me to your mailing list. I enjoy *Fulfilled Magazine* and eagerly await each new issue. It's refreshing to see believers question many traditional viewpoints concerning Bible prophecy—not in an attempt to deliberately chart a radical new course, but merely allowing the twin voices of Scripture and history to speak for themselves.

Charlie, West Virginia

Please keep me on your mailing list. I thoroughly enjoy your magazine—especially the latest series by Ed Stevens, *Apostolic Canonization of the New Testament before AD 70*. God bless you all.

Laurette, Vermont

Thank you, thank you for this magazine. I eagerly await each new copy. Dr. Kelly Birks' article really "opened up a whole new window."

Carole, California

I must tell you that you're providing wonderful resources for the Christian community in the ongoing battle for truth. I thoroughly enjoyed *Behind the Veil of Moses*, and have been thrilled to see *Fulfilled!* established and take off!

Steve, Washington

We love this magazine and look forward to every one.

Darrell & Eve, Washington



I MUST TELL YOU
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THE CHRISTIAN
COMMUNITY . . .

mailing list, or have expressly requested to be removed from the list. As you might imagine, producing a magazine, and now videos, in our "spare" time keeps us quite busy. Therefore, I would respectfully ask that if you have someone whom you would like to have receive the magazine, please encourage them to sign up for themselves, either online or by writing us. If you do send us a name, we will send them a sample issue of the magazine along with an introductory letter presenting them the opportunity to sign up. At the risk of sounding harsh, if someone does not make the effort to either send an email or write a letter, I must conclude that they are not very interested. I would rather spend my time, and your donation dollars, on those who are truly interested in exploring Preterism.

Speaking of time, I suppose that I am like most of you and don't have enough of it. I have the "good" problem of increasing response to the magazine, and now the video, which quickly consumes this precious commodity. Therefore, I am simply unable to accept the many Twitter, Facebook, chat-room, and similar invitations which I receive. I am flattered by the invitations, and truly wish that I could participate. However, I already have a constant, nagging sense of being behind, and adding these other activities would only compound that. I do my best to reply to emails and letters—I hope that you will understand if I do not accept your invitation to these other venues.

Lastly, but certainly not least, we are extremely excited to share with you Michael Loomis' announcement of a 24/7 online Full-Preterist radio station. Michael formerly produced radio programs for Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa. Having embraced Preterism, Michael is using his radio production experience to bless the Preterist community. See page 15 for more details.

For Christ's Glory,

Brian



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 the pen of the early church historian Eusebius, from his work titled *The Theophania, or Divine Manifestation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*. (My thanks to Joseph Vincent for sharing this with me several years ago.)

Book 4, paragraph 36. *“Ye shall hear indeed of wars, and rumours of wars: see that ye be not moved, for it is necessary they should be; but the End is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there shall be famines and pestilences, and commotions in divers places. And all these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they give you up to affliction, and shall kill you in divers places. And all these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they give you up to affliction, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated by all nations for my name’s sake.”* And after this He added, and said, *“Then shall many stumble, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many. And, because of the abundance of iniquity, the love of many shall wax cold. But he, who shall bear until the End, shall live. And the Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world, for the testimony of all nations; and then cometh the End.”* He clearly foretold also by these things, that His Gospel should, of necessity, first be preached in the whole creation, for the testimony of all nations, *“and then should the END come.”* For the END of the world should not come, before (the Gospel) had been preached; but, when His word should have so taken effect among all nations, that the people should be few, among whom His Gospel had not been preached; so also should the time of the END be short (in its coming). He further teaches and says, *“Ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars: see that ye be not moved, for it is necessary they should be; but the End is not yet.”* He also shews when this shall be, for He says, *“The Gospel of the kingdom*

shall be preached in the whole creation, for the testimony of all nations: and then cometh the end.” When also, *“famines and pestilences, and commotions (shall be) in divers places, and nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom”* and there shall be overwhelming persecutions, and great afflictions. After these things too, He says, *“And ye shall be hated of all nations”* not on account of any other hateful acts, but *“for my name’s sake.”*

37. These proofs of the Divine manifestation of our Saviour, which we have thus far seen, are at the same time demonstrative, that both the words and deeds (had in view) are Divine. For in former times, the words were simply heard; **but now, in our times, the fulfillment of these words is openly visible in deed**, together with powers eclipsing those of all mortal nature. And, if men will not be persuaded by these, we ought not to wonder: because it is usual with man *so* to resist things the **most plain, as even to dare to oppose** by his words the existence of an universal Providence; and hence also, to deny God himself! And thus also, will he disingenuously contend against many other things, to which the truth bears testimony. But, as the injurious conduct of these detracts in no respect from the word, which is in its own nature true; so also will the wicked unbelief of men, in no way injure the evident excellency of the Godhead of our Saviour. But, if it is right that we should compose, for these also, a form (of prescription) conducing to intellectual health; it is time that we should here again present, for their use, (other) proofs of the (truth of the) Gospel, and now also recite the things, which have formerly been investigated with reference to other (objectors), as to those who will not be persuaded by the things (hitherto) said. ❧

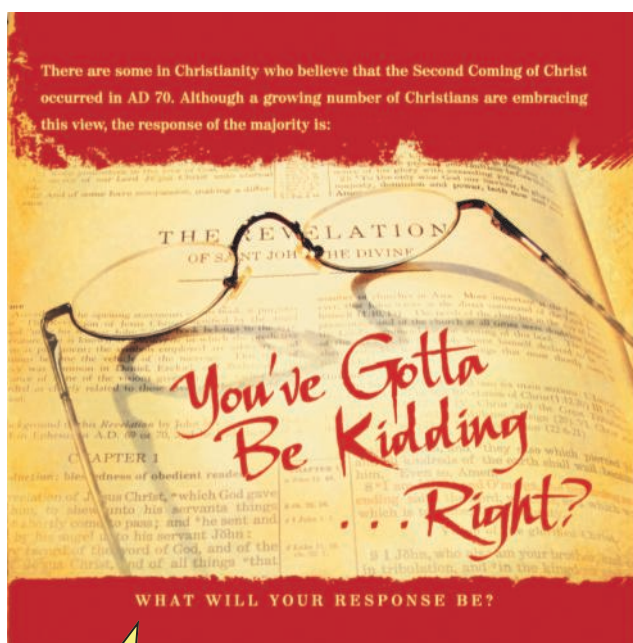
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CREATION TO COMPLETION

Studies in Redemption

Ed is taking a brief hiatus from his series of articles on Matthew 24 in order to research some subjects more thoroughly. In the interim he is providing a series of articles on the dating of the New Testament canon. Ed will resume his series on Matthew 24 after this series concludes—BLM

Apostolic Canonization (Part 3)

By Ed Stevens

In the first article of this series we introduced the idea that the apostles produced the entire New Testament canon before they passed from the earthly scene. In the second article we explained how every book of the New Testament was written before AD 70. This third article focuses on how all the New Testament books were circulated among the churches and gathered into complete collections before AD 70. The fourth and final article (in the next issue) will deal with the certification of those books as canonical before AD 70 by the apostles (especially Peter).

Were all twenty-seven New Testament books in circulation and available as a complete collection before AD 70? Acts and Paul's epistles can help us answer this question. Notice what Paul says to the church at Colossae:

When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter that is coming from Laodicea. (Col 4:16, NAS95)

Many first-century churches had copies of the apostolic writings for public reading in their assemblies, as well as to lend to other nearby churches. The apostles took certified master copies of their books on their journeys, from which the churches could make their own copies. Evidence for this can be found in the colophons and data birds (literary and artistic elements used by authors to inform readers who wrote the book, when and where it was written, and under whose authority it was produced or sent) found on some of the earliest manuscripts (like Codex W). This implies a wide circulation of the books wherever the apostles traveled. The apostles—and Peter especially—would have maintained a complete certified collection of all these writings at the mother church in Jerusalem. Paul also mentions his collection of *books and parchments*:

When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books [Gk. biblia, scrolls], especially the parchments [Gk. membranas]. (2 Tim 4:13, NAS95)

Paul had a collection of books (scrolls) and parchments (parchment sheets probably bound together in codex form). He evidently kept copies of his epistles with him so that the churches he visited could copy from his originals.

When Peter wrote his second epistle in AD 64, he showed that he was not only aware that Paul had written a number of epistles, but that he had evidently read them, and was here stating his approval of them:

*And regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also **our beloved brother Paul**, according to the wisdom given him, **wrote to you**, as also in **all his letters**, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also **the rest of the Scriptures**, to their own destruction. (2 Pet 3:15-16, NAS95)*

There are four things we need to notice in these two verses (see the boldfaced words in the text above). Peter refers to Paul in post-mortem eulogistic style (“our beloved brother”) as if Paul was already dead. He uses the past tense (“wrote to you”) in regard to Paul’s writing activities as if Paul was no longer writing to them. Peter then mentions Paul’s letters as a group (“all his letters”) as if he had access to a completed collection of them, which implies that Paul had already been martyred and was no longer writing letters to the churches. And finally, Peter places Paul’s collection of letters on a par with “the rest of the scriptures,” which certifies their inspiration and canonical authority. Peter here uses his “keys of the Kingdom” (binding and loosing) authority to pronounce the whole collection of Paul’s letters as canonical.

The point we want to stress about these two texts (2 Tim 4:13; 2 Pet 3:15-16) is that both Paul and Peter had access to a collection of New Testament documents. Peter had read Matthew’s gospel and found it lacking some of the details that he remembered about Christ, so Mark (his scribe and courier) wrote an account which included those details and perspectives of Peter. John supposedly remembered details that the other three gospels did not include, and recorded them in his gospel. Peter, Mark, and John would have done this writing in Jerusalem, and the church there would have maintained a master collection of all these writings for other churches to copy from. It is essential to the theory of Apostolic Canonization for the Jerusalem church (and Peter especially) to have in their possession a complete collection of apostolic writings before AD 70. By using the book of Acts, Paul’s epistles, and Peter’s epistles, it is easy to support this theory.

Luke states at the beginning of his gospel that “many have undertaken to compile an account” of the things that Jesus did

CONSUMMATION

Emptive History



and taught (Luke 1:1ff). Luke states that he researched those other accounts “carefully” (Luke 1:3) and compiled his account in chronological order so that Theophilus could know the exact truth about all these things. He obviously had access to those other gospels for a significant period of time while he was writing his own gospel. After Paul was arrested in Jerusalem in AD 58, he was imprisoned in Caesarea for two years before being sent to Rome. During those two years, Luke had ample time to go to Jerusalem, research the other gospel accounts, and write in collaboration with the apostles there. It was primarily Matthew and Mark to whom he had access, since Luke’s gospel shows the most similarity to their gospels, while showing no familiarity with John’s gospel (which was probably not written until after Luke had completed his gospel).

Paul’s imprisonment in nearby Caesarea for two years (AD 58-60) would have been a perfect opportunity for the Jerusalem church to make copies of all of Paul’s epistles (if they had not already done so on Paul’s previous visits to Jerusalem). This indeed was a very providential time for the writing, circulation, and collection of the New Testament books by the Jerusalem church under the leadership of the apostle Peter.

In addition to copies of his own epistles, Paul also had Luke, Matthew, and Mark’s gospels. Thus the only books Paul might not have possessed were those last few general epistles that were written after he was arrested and sent to Rome the first time. Since Mark was the scribe and courier for Peter, and traveled extensively throughout Syria, Turkey, Cyprus, Greece, and Rome, it is quite possible that Mark may have brought copies of those epistles with him to Rome. The travels of Paul, Mark, and the other apostolic traveling companions, could easily explain how most (if not all) of the New Testament manuscripts could have been copied at all the major churches in the Roman world.

Peter’s base of operations was Jerusalem, from where his two epistles were written. The epistle of Jude was evidently written about the same time as Peter’s second epistle. The remarkable similarities between Jude and Second Peter suggest that both epistles were written in Jerusalem at about the same time. Both Matthew and Mark’s gospels were also written in Jerusalem. John’s gospel and three epistles were written in Jerusalem, as was the epistle of James. From 2 Peter 3:15-16 it seems clear that Peter (in Jerusalem) had access to the whole corpus of Paul’s fourteen epistles (assuming Hebrews was written by Paul). And, as we noted above, Luke and Acts had been written four years earlier while Paul was imprisoned in nearby Caesarea. That leaves only one book (the book of Revelation, written on Patmos in AD 62-63) written outside of Palestine to which Peter may

not have had access at the time he wrote his two epistles. However, noting the reference to “Babylon” in 1 Peter 5:13, some have suggested that Peter may have had access to the book of Revelation even before he wrote his first epistle in late AD 63 or early 64. If that was the case, Peter had access to all twenty-seven New Testament books before he was martyred in the Neronian persecution in late AD 64 or early 65. The book of Jude, written about the same time as 2 Peter, even states that the system of faith chronicled in the New Testament had already been “*once for all delivered to the saints*” (Jude 3). Thus, the work of the Paraclete as described in John 14:25-26 and 16:12-13 was finished. In order for Jude to make such an absolute statement, he would have needed to have access to a complete collection of New Testament books (in Jerusalem especially), and also to have known that the collection was complete (because all the inspired writers were either dead or were about to be killed in the Neronian persecution) and therefore no more books were to be written.

The premise of the circulation and collection of all the New Testament writings in Jerusalem before AD 70 seems easily defensible. We will conclude this series in our next article by examining Peter’s role in the certification of all these books as inspired and authoritative before he died in late AD 64 or early 65.

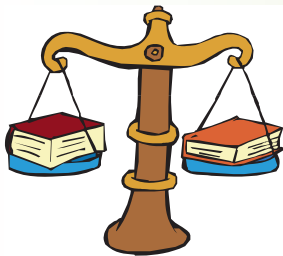
P.S. For a much more detailed explanation of the rationale for a pre-70 dating of all the New Testament books and their canonization before AD 70, you may order my manuscript, *First Century Events in Chronological Order*, which has recently been expanded to triple its size. A great deal of historical detail has been added. The new version can be ordered on our secure website order form (www.preterist.org). If you purchased the original 20-page version, you can get the new updated 70-page edition for \$5 plus shipping. Simply order it on our secure website order form (www.preterist.org) and mention in the comments box that you bought the original version and want to take advantage of the \$5 upgrade plus shipping.

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Objection: Israel Will Remain God's People As Long As Creation Exists!

By Don K. Preston

Objection stated: Jeremiah writes, “*Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for a light by day, the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, Who disturbs the sea, and its waves roar (The LORD of hosts is His name): ‘If those ordinances depart from before Me, says the LORD, then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before Me forever’*” (Jer 31:35-36).

In light of this passage, how can Preterists claim that God is through with national Israel? Since the sun and moon are still lighting the sky, Israel must still be a nation before God.”

As with many objections, this *sounds* good, until one looks closer. Only then is it revealed that there are inherent inconsistencies in the objection. Let’s take a closer look.

It must be noted that even the staunchest millennialists believe that one of these days—at the end of the Millennium—the ordinances of the sun, moon and stars will be literally broken! It is believed that at the end of the Millennium the literal cosmos is either completely annihilated or is refurbished after first being destroyed. So, if in fact Israel can cease from being God’s people when the sun, moon and stars are destroyed, then Israel will in fact cease from being God’s people at the end of the Millennium!

It must also be noted that Scripture does affirm, in the clearest terms, that Israel would be destroyed when “heaven and earth” would be destroyed.

Psalm 102:25f, cited in Hebrews 1 in the context of the passing of the Old Covenant world, foretold the “growing old” and the passing of the “heavens and earth.” This text is problematic for the objection above. The creation would pass when “a people yet to be created may praise the Lord” (v. 18). This would be the time of the redemption of Zion (v. 21), when “the children of Your servants will continue” (v. 28). So, on the one hand, we have the redemption of Jerusalem, but on the other hand we find the creation of a new people—both to occur at the passing of the heavens and earth!

How can the Psalmist affirm both the continuance

OBJECTION OVER

of the seed of Israel and the creation of a new people at the same time? Simply stated, the Old Covenant people would pass, but a New Covenant people with a new name would be created. We must understand this within the context of the definition of the true seed of Abraham. In Galatians 3-4 Paul established that the true seed of Abraham is of faith, not flesh. (See my *Who Is This Babylon?* for a discussion of the “Two Jerusalems.” The physical city would perish after/when she had served her purpose, giving way to the heavenly, spiritual Jerusalem). The indisputable fact is that in Psalms we find the affirmation of the destruction of “heaven and earth,” as well as the creation of a new people. The millennial paradigm has no place for such a doctrine.

In Isaiah 65, YHVH predicted that He would slay Old Covenant Israel and create “A New Heavens and a New Earth,” for the former (the former heavens and earth!) would not be remembered (Isa 65:13-19)! So, YHVH prophesied that the Old Creation would pass away, and said: “The Lord God will slay you” (v. 13f)! Thus, Scripture explicitly combines the destruction of Old Covenant Israel with the time the New Creation arrives.

We must note also that the Old Creation of Isaiah 65 is a *covenant creation*. Note that it says at the creation of the New World, “the former (the former *heaven and earth*, DKP) shall not be remembered” (v. 17). The word “remembered” is loaded with covenantal significance. It is not simply mental recall. It means to “bring to mind” *within* the context of *covenant* (cf. Exod 2:24; 6:5; Num 10:9, Jer 3:16)! This means that the first “heaven and earth” of Isaiah 65 was a covenantal creation! It was Israel’s covenantal world.

Millennialists claim that Isaiah 65 describes life in the Millennium. However, this demands that God will slay Israel when He introduces the Millennium! The description of life in Isaiah 65 *follows* the destruction of Israel. What must not be missed is that the

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OBJECTION: OVER-RULED!



New Creation comes when a New People, with a New Name, is created. The very thing that the objection above denies is affirmed by Isaiah. Thus, Isaiah alone falsifies the objection.

Daniel 12:1-7 emphatically says that the time of the end, *the kingdom*, etc., would come “. . . when the power of the holy people is completely shattered . . .” (Dan 12:7).

The “power of the holy people” was her covenantal relationship with YHVH. Thus, Old Covenant Israel would indeed be “shattered” at the very time that millennialism says she would be restored!

Let’s look now at Matthew 5:18, where Jesus said, “Until heaven and earth passes, not one jot or one tittle shall pass from the law until it is all fulfilled.” This text creates a huge dilemma for the objection above.

All millennialists insist that Torah (the Law) has been removed. But Jesus said “heaven and earth” had to pass for Torah to pass! The very event that the objection denies is *affirmed* by Jesus, and He posits the passing of that “heaven and earth” at

the time of the fulfillment of the Old Law!

When did Jesus say that all of the Old Testament would be fulfilled? Read Luke 21:22. In describing the fall of Jerusalem, our Lord said, “These be the days of vengeance in which all things that are written must be fulfilled.” We thus have in Scripture the affirmation of the following:

- The passing of the “heaven and earth.”
 - The passing of heaven and earth at the time of the creation of a new covenantal people.
 - The passing of heaven and earth when Old Covenant Israel would be completely shattered.
 - The passing of heaven and earth when the Old Covenant was completely fulfilled.
 - The complete fulfillment in AD 70.
- The problem with the objection un-

der consideration is that it interprets the language of Scripture from a modern cosmological perspective, while ignoring the Hebraic world-view and how the language of Scripture is the language of *covenant*. To insist that language must be taken in some woodenly literal manner, divorced from its ancient historical context, is misguided.

It is clear from just the four passages cited above that Scripture affirms the very thing that the objection seeks to deny. To reiterate, Scripture affirms the passing of Old Covenant Israel as God’s chosen physical seed. This would occur at the destruction of Israel’s covenant world. This would also be when God created a new people with a new name, all of which implies that it would be at the establishment of the New Covenant.

Israel was God’s chosen people, chosen by *grace* (not by race) to accomplish His plan. He promised that He would not leave them, *until He had accomplished those promises* (cf. Gen 28:15f). Israel served as a shadow of “better things to come,” and when those better things arrived, that Old Covenant, with its natural and temporary relationship, was *supposed* to pass. This was God’s original purpose. God’s promises to Israel did not fail. Israel, on the other hand, did fail to comprehend the temporary nature of her covenant and world. But Israel’s failure does not mean that God’s purposes and promises failed.

Just as promised, YHVH fulfilled all of His promises. Israel’s “heaven and earth” passed away and Israel, as an exclusive, chosen people, likewise passed. God created a new people with a new name, and a new heaven and new earth. The seed of Abraham inherit this New Creation and will never pass away, just as promised! Objection Over-Ruled!

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

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Michael Fenemore

What Do We Have Now?

Sharing our Preterist beliefs eventually elicits this response: “If everything is fulfilled, what do we have now?” This is usually an expression of profound disappointment since most Futurist Christians, rightfully fed up with this evil world, hope Jesus will return soon to set up a 1,000-year kingdom of peace. When we claim that all prophecy has been fulfilled, their glorious vision vaporizes. Moreover, with no hope of a rapture, they soon apprehend the implication: *they must experience death!*

Feeling a sense of loss is a necessary step in the withdrawal process from Futurism which is akin to a drug-induced, artificial high. Eventually, however, the convert to Preterism realizes significant benefits.

Faith

Admittedly, it would be nice to see Jesus blazing out of the sky to erase all evil and rule the earth in peace; but we must reject any such scenario as fantasy. This is a big step toward spiritual maturity since we must now *live by faith, not knowing the future*. It opens the door to the rich spiritual life we were intended to live in this world, in total dependence on God, confidently looking ahead to the day we die. However, to the Christian trusting in an escape plan from tribulation, this may not sound appealing. That’s because the rewards for living by faith must be experienced to be appreciated. The Futurist, focused on a “bailout,” is, at least to some degree, missing out on opportunities to develop faith.

It is simply not God’s way to set out the future before us so we can trust in *that* instead of Him. He expects us to walk through life by faith (2 Cor 5:7, ESV throughout). He promised Abraham a son and then remained silent for many years. However, Abraham continued in faith and was commended for it (Gen 15:6; Heb 11:8-12). On the other hand, the ancient Israelites, miraculously freed from Egypt, were infamous for their extreme *lack* of faith. They were never content leaving their future in God’s hands. As soon as they experienced a little difficulty and the future appeared uncertain, they panicked and complained to Moses. For this, they were denied entry to the Promised Land, most living out their lives in desert conditions “beyond the Jordan in the wilderness” (Num 14:20-24; Deut 1:1).

Clearly, God is not pleased with people who worry about the future. Yet today, huge ministries are *entirely focused on the future*, enticing credulous Christians into adopting the mentality of the faithless Israelites. Yes, Futurist Christians have their trials too and do demonstrate faith in God; but many seem to be just hanging on by their fingernails, hoping Jesus will

soon rapture them away. For millions, abandoning this hope would be unthinkable. The Preterist, however, knows that letting the futuristic paradigm go and resting entirely in the arms of God is not unthinkable at all; it’s a relief. We no longer waste our time on useless endeavors like trying to identify the antichrist, or agonizing over whether the rapture will be pre-trib or post-trib. Not preoccupied with such unproductive activities, we are free to concentrate on developing the “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal 5:22-23), the qualities God is really interested in. Furthermore, by seeing ourselves as more long-term residents of this planet, our faith can translate into a more serious commitment to making the world a better place, unlike Futurists who cannot help but be drawn into a “what’s-the-use” mentality foreseeing a future guaranteed to degenerate into catastrophe.

Hope

To eventually share heaven with God is the very purpose of human life; but it seems few preachers mention the subject very much. This may be largely due to the nebulous picture of the afterlife most envision. Futurists know that if Christ hasn’t returned, there is no way anyone could have obtained the “imperishable” body promised in 1 Corinthians 15:50-55. This means no Christians who have died could have bodies. But much worse, and evidently, unbeknownst to most Futurists, an unfulfilled return of Christ implies that *no Christians could be in heaven in the first place!* This is one very sad implication of Futurism to which Preterists are not shackled.

The following is a quotation from *The Westminster Confession of Faith* [1646], Chapter XXXIII.I: “The souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies.” This is impossible. Paul said he and other first-century Christians *groaned* and *longed* to be clothed with their bodies from heaven, and he guaranteed the Corinthians they would not be “found naked” when their mortal bodies were “swallowed up by life” (2 Cor 5:1-5). However, the popular teaching implies millions of Christians are floating around God’s throne as *stark naked spirits*, still groaning and longing to be “clothed”; waiting “eagerly” for the redemption of their bodies (Rom 8:23). Paul said, “this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality (1 Cor 15:53). Not only was this “change” (v. 51) a “must,” Paul clearly precluded any enormous gap between the two states where the Chris-

*If everything was fulfilled,
what do Christians have left?*

Kurt Simmons



tian would be “found naked.” Moreover, he wrote, “in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ (1 Cor 15:22b-23). So if Jesus has not returned, no Christian could yet be “alive” in heaven with God. No wonder most Christians are confused about heaven.

Preterists, on the other hand, far from having no hope for the future as some might suggest, have a *fabulous* hope: eternity in heaven fully “clothed” with imperishable bodies to be received immediately upon departure from this life. *Only Full-Preterism* offers an interpretation allowing for Christians to be “alive” with Christ after death; and when we see Him, “we shall be like him” (1 John 3:2). There are no disembodied spirits in heaven.

Love

“So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

—1 Cor 13:13

Besides increased *faith* and a superior *hope*, Preterists have special opportunities to grow in *love*. We can easily become disgusted with Futurists, especially when they write books disparaging us, call us heretics or just stubbornly cling to illogical be-

liefs. Some disgust may be justified, but if we are not careful, it can degenerate into something worse. I must be constantly aware of this issue. At www.Preterism.info, I have made it my mission to criticize prominent theologians who say things I think are outrageous. Over the years, this endeavor has afforded an opportunity for growth. Regularly reexamining my motives, always remembering that I am a former Futurist myself and trying to keep my writing from becoming mean-spirited, all contribute toward my ongoing development as a loving servant of Christ. So, as frustrating as Futurists may be at times, I try to keep myself reminded that our sadly deluded brothers and sisters need our love, for even if we have “all knowledge,” without love we are “nothing” (1 Cor 13:2; cf. Eph 4:2-3).

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Fulfilled Eschatology and Christianity Today

“Preterism seems to apply everything to AD 70 - does anything apply to us today? How should Preterists be living out a fulfilled eschatology?”

What Applies?

People coming to Preterism sometimes find the idea of an unknown or unwritten future troubling. Perhaps they come from a church background that teaches members to live in a state of heightened expectation of the imminent, cataclysmic end of the cosmos. Perhaps they have been taught, like so many today, to live in anticipation of a coming world “antichrist,” a time of “great tribulation,” and a “rapture.” Perhaps they have been taught that the Second Coming is the one great hope for which the Christian lives. Now, learning that these are all past events, the lack of prophetic expectation leaves them feeling strangely awkward and empty, as if without these things to look forward to their Christianity is somehow anti-climatic.

This type of experience is not unusual. Whenever we have a shift of paradigms there is a period of adjustment. We feel a certain discomfort as we experience change. But as we learn to correct our hopes and expectations to match our new understanding, we quickly find ourselves at home with the truth. Also, it is important to remember that Christianity is not about the “end of the world,” but about changed lives, obedience to God, and loving our fellow man. The day-to-day stuff of Christianity is of a much more mundane and practical nature than the stuff of “Left Behind” and televangelism, but it is also much more meaningful and rewarding. The change may take a little getting used to, but it is worth it. Still, the question remains: What applies to us today, and what does not, and how are Christians to live in light of fulfilled eschatology?

The Moral Law

The moral laws of God are timeless; they applied in the garden; they applied under the patriarchs; they were codified under the Mosaic Law; and they apply now under the gospel era. Fornication, adultery, murder, covetousness, hate, greed, theft, overreaching—these have always been and always will be against the law of God. The passing of the Mosaic Law and temple ritual had no affect on these whatever. Christians must live within the bounds and mandate of the moral law if they would be saved:

... WHY THEN
 ARE THERE SO
 MANY
 DIFFERING
 OPINIONS
 WITHIN THE
 REFORMED
 COMMUNITY
 WHEN IT COMES
 TO THE
 QUESTION OF
 HOW TO FORM
 A SOUND
 ESCHATOLOGY?



Kurt Simmons (from p. 11)

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Gal 6:7, 8).

The Law of Sin and Death

We are not saved by the subtraction of law, but the addition of grace. The law of sin and death was present in the garden (*“in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”* Gen 2:17), it was present under the patriarchs, it was present under Moses, and it is present today. Sin is transgression of God’s law; every commandment of God has the law of sin and death annexed. Christians have grace as long as they attempt to live in obedience to the law of Christ. John writes there are “sins unto death” and there are “sins not unto death” (1 John 5:16). Presumptuous sin, sin that is willful and deliberate, hating our brother, sexual immorality, abandoning the faith, denying Christ, neglecting our own salvation—these are sins unto death. We find grace for these only as we repent of them and turn again to Christ. Lesser sins, unavoidable sins of our fallen nature, are covered by the blood of Jesus as we live in obedience to His gospel. *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”* (1 John 1:7).

Christian Ordinances and Sacraments

Some have supposed that the New Testament ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper terminated at the eschaton. We believe this sort of teaching is dangerously mistaken.

Baptism is an essential teaching of the gospel. Jesus’ last commandment before His ascension was that the disciples continue the work of preaching baptism and remission of sins in His name. *“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned”* (Mark 16:15, 16). Paul was told to wash away his sins by evoking the Lord’s name in baptism: *“And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord”* (Acts 22:16). Peter said “baptism doth also now save us” (1 Pet 3:21). Paul called baptism the “circumcision of Christ” (Col 2:11, 12). We are “buried by baptism into Christ’s death” (Rom 6:3-6). In baptism, we are made the seed of Abraham and heirs of eternal life: *“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise”* (Gal 3:27-29).

These and other verses show that baptism is an ordinance or sacrament by which we enter a covenant relationship with

God. As the New Testament is still in force, so is the ordinance of baptism.

Similarly, the Lord’s Supper is a permanent feature of the New Testament economy. Jesus said *“This do in remembrance of me”* (Luke 22:19). Paul characterized the Lord’s Supper as a “participation” in the body and blood of Christ: *“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”* (1 Cor 10:16, 17). Therefore, communion is a participation in the body and blood of Christ; it renews the blood of the covenant we first encountered in repentance and baptism. This makes communion serious stuff! Of course, communion is not a participation in the actual body and blood of Christ; we do not believe in the doctrine of “transubstantiation.” However, the bread and fruit of the vine are deemed Christ’s body and blood in *contemplation of law*, and therefore to be approached only by believers, with appropriate reverence and discernment. It was for lack of sufficient reverence and discernment that Paul wrote that many of the Corinthians were sick and fallen asleep (died).

Promised Inheritance

Preterism teaches that the redemption of man is complete; that the world is firmly beneath the government of Christ, who rules the nations with a rod of iron. The last enemy, Hadean death, has been destroyed; our loved ones who have gone before us are now in heaven, not waiting in Hades for resurrection day. Preterism teaches that Christians today live in present glory of divine adoption as sons and daughters of God; we are citizens of heaven, and enjoy the hope and assurance of eternal inheritance at physical death.

Heaven has always been the ultimate hope and purpose of the saints. Unlike Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Postmillennialists like Kenneth Gentry and Keith Mathison, who believe that our eternal state is on a “material new creation,” the Bible teaches that our inheritance is in heaven above. Abraham and the patriarchs looked to the heavenly reward: *“But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city”* (Heb 11:16). Peter writes we have been called *“to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you”* (1 Pet 1:4). Jesus said that in the resurrection we will be *“as angels of God in heaven”* (Matt 2:30).

The Last Trump?

I have come recently to see I Corinthians 15:51, 52 in a new light:

cont. on page 15

Milton S. Terry

Principles of Biblical Hermeneutics

Part Second: Chapter 1 Preliminary

The principles of biblical hermeneutics are those governing laws and methods of procedure by which the interpreter determines the meaning of the Holy Scriptures. These principles are of the nature of comprehensive and fundamental doctrines. They become to the practical exegete so many maxims, postulates, and settled rules. He is supposed to hold them in the mind as axioms, and to apply them in all his expositions with uniform consistency.

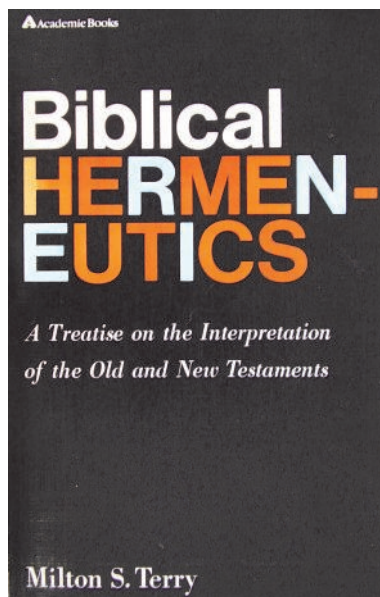
The importance of establishing sound and trustworthy principles of biblical exposition is universally conceded. For it is evident that a false principle in his method will necessarily vitiate [pervert] the entire exegetical process of an interpreter. When we find that in the explanation of certain parts of the Scriptures no two interpreters out of a whole class agree, we have great reason to presume at once that some fatal error lurks in their principles of interpretations. We cannot believe that the sacred writers desired to be misunderstood. They did not write with a purpose to confuse and mislead their readers. Nor is it reasonable to suppose that the Scripture, given by divine inspiration, is of the nature of a puzzle designed to exercise the ingenuity of critics. It was given to make men wise unto salvation, and in great part it is so direct and simple in its teachings that a little child can understand its meaning. But the Bible contains some riddles and dark sayings, and many revelations in the form of types, symbols, parables, allegories, visions, and dreams, and the interpretation of these has exercised the most gifted minds. Many different and often contradictory methods of exposition have been adopted, and some enthusiasts have gone to the extreme of affirming that there are manifold meanings and “mountains of sense” in every line of Scripture. Under the spell of some such fascination many have

been strangely misled, and have set forth as expositions of the Scriptures their own futile fancies.

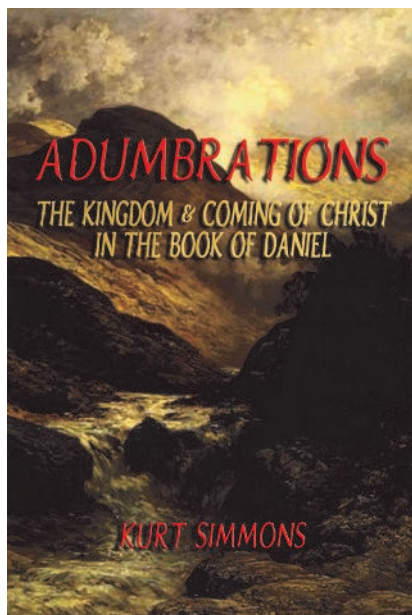
Sound hermeneutical principles are, therefore, elements of safety and satisfaction in the study of God’s written word. But how are such principles to be ascertained and established? How may we determine what is true and what is false in the various methods of exposition? We must go to the Scriptures themselves, and search them in all their parts and forms. We must seek to ascertain the principles which the sacred writers followed. Naked propositions, or formulated rules of interpretation, will be of little or no worth unless supported and illustrated by self-verifying examples. It is worthy of note that the Scriptures furnish repeated examples of the formal interpretation of dreams, visions, types, symbols, and parables. In such examples we are especially to seek our fundamental and controlling laws of exposition. Unless we find clear warrant for it in the word itself, we should never allow that any one passage or sentiment of divine revelation has more than one true import. The Holy Scripture is no Delphic oracle to bewilder and mislead the human heart by utterances of double

meaning. God’s written word, taken as a whole, and allowed to speak for itself, will be found to be its own best interpreter.

The process of observing laws of thought and language, as exhibited in the Holy Scriptures, is an ennobling study. It affords an edifying intercourse with eminent and choice spirits of the past, and compels us for the time to lose sight of temporary interests, and to become absorbed with the thoughts and feelings of other ages. He who forms the habit of studying not only the divine thoughts of revelation, but also the principles and methods according which those thought have been expressed, will acquire a moral and intellectual culture worthy of the noblest ambition. X



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Ad-um-brate (ad um’ brāt, ad’em brāt’) 1. To give a faint shadow or resemblance of; to outline or sketch. 2. To foreshadow; prefigure. 3. To darken or conceal partially; overshadow.

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Kurt Simmons (from p. 11)

“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of any eye, at the last trump: for a trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

I have presented the verse here as it occurs in the Greek, substituting “*the* trumpet shall sound” (definite article) with “*a* trumpet shall sound” (indefinite article). The translators apparently assumed that “the last trump” is identical with the trumpet that would call forth the dead from Hades and therefore substituted the definite article for the indefinite. But the assumption is not necessarily sound; the Greek seems to distinguish between the last trump that marks the change of the living, and the trumpet that would mark the resurrection of the dead. In the past, I have always assumed they were the same trumpet. This caused me to interpret the “eschatological change” legally and covenantally, consisting of going from a state of betrothal to a consummated marriage with Christ. While that still may be true, the possibility that the trumpets are not the same means that the “change” need not have occurred in AD 70, but happens as a process over time as individual saints one-by-one are called from this life. This is my understanding of 1 Thessalonians 4:17, where Paul writes that “*we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air.*”

That is, the saints were not caught up simultaneously at the trump of God marking the resurrection of the dead, but in a process over time as individual saints pass from this life. Adjusting our thinking to allow for more than one trumpet allows for the harmonization of these two texts.

If this is correct, then there is a last trump for *each of us* that will call us from this world to the next, and each of us should be so living as to be acceptable to the Lord when called before Him. “*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*” (2 Cor 5:10).

Conclusion

Fulfilled eschatology does not change how we live or the essence of the Christian hope. Rather than being distracted with sensational ideas of a coming “antichrist” and “great tribulation” or “rapture,” we can live daily life and plan for tomorrow in consciousness of our heavenly hope and goal. ✚

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