

FALL 2010

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 3

FULFILLED! Magazine

PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS OF FULFILLED PROPHECY AND LIFE IN CHRIST

**IN THIS ISSUE:
PERSPECTIVES -
"MANY PRETERISTS
FEEL ISOLATED IN
THEIR STAND FOR
TRUTH"**

**WHEREFORE TAKE
UNTO YOU THE WHOLE
ARMOR OF GOD,
THAT YE MAY BE ABLE
TO WITHSTAND IN THE
EVIL DAY, AND HAVING
DONE ALL, TO STAND.
(EPH 6:13 KJV)**



ON THE COVER: Many Preterists feel isolated in their stand for truth.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. (Eph. 6:10-20 KJV)



Are you interested in seeing Preterist DVD's aired on TV stations in your area?

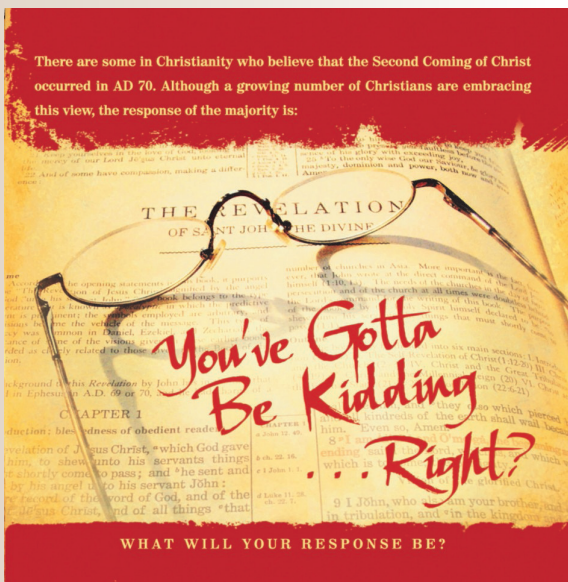
Are you interested in helping to make Preterist video available to those in your area?

If so, contact Dave Warren for more details:

Phone: (808) 250-2870

(Dave lives in Hawaii, so please keep the time difference in mind)

Email: dr.lahainadave@gmail.com



Follow host Brian L. Martin as he attempts to correct his Preterist coworker, only to end up being convinced of the scriptural support for Preterism. This ninety minute video walks the viewer through the biblical concepts of audience relevance, apocalyptic language, cloud-comings, and more. Preliminary viewings have left Preterists clamoring for copies to hand out, and Futurists stunned at the biblical support for Preterism. Priced for easy distribution, order several copies!

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4. Editor's Note

Although I am not an authority on the history of Preterism, it seems to me that Preterism is experiencing an unprecedented growth.

5. Mailbag

Catch some of the letters to the editor and comments on articles and features from the readers.

6. Perspectives

"Many Preterists are isolated from meaningful fellowship, or feel uncomfortable sitting under Futurist teaching. What advice can you offer?"

8. Objection Overruled

Zechariah says "all nations" would (will) be gathered against Jerusalem in the last days. However, only Rome came against Jerusalem in AD 70, therefore, AD 70 cannot be the fulfillment of Zechariah 12.

11. Creation to Consummation

Thomas Ice and other Premillennial Dispensationalists are quick to assert that the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 was merely a regional conflict focused upon the Jews in Palestine. Because this conflict had no worldwide significance it could not have been the Great Tribulation foretold by Jesus. Therefore, Dispensationalists reason that the Great Tribulation still lay in the future.

15. 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.



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Published by
FULFILLED
COMMUNICATIONS
GROUP

Subscriptions

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The views expressed here are those of the individual contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors or other contributors.

Editor's Note...

I'm sure that you have noticed a "new look" to *Fulfilled!* Magazine. The credit goes to David Dornian, a Canadian Preterist who, by God's grace, recently crossed our path. Although David has been a Preterist for ten years, he was unaware of *Fulfilled!* Magazine. While browsing the internet recently he came across our site and then contacted me. David is a newspaper/magazine design and layout artist by profession and, upon discovering our magazine, he offered his talents. After exchanging a few emails and draft layouts, I knew that God had graciously provided a much needed talent to FCG—much like He did when Mike Beidler offered us his editing skills a few years ago (an ongoing effort which greatly improves the quality of FCG materials).

An hour-long phone conversation with David revealed that he has a heart for God and His Word, and is excited about what God is doing in the Preterist community. He is looking forward to being able to apply his talents and skills not just to his profession, but now to his confession of Preterism as well. Needless to say, I am greatly excited about this latest addition to the FCG "team." Not only will it improve the visual quality of the magazine, it will free up valuable time on my part, allowing me to work on other projects. Welcome to the team, David!

The previous quarter finally saw the sales of our DVD "You've Gotta Be Kidding . . . Right?" taper off. Nevertheless, by the time you read this, approximately 3,500 copies will have been distributed. Just because the sales have tapered off doesn't mean the video has run its course—quite the contrary! Thanks to the efforts of Dave Warren in Hawaii, our DVD (along with several other Preterist videos) is being aired on local stations in Hawaii, New York, and Virginia. These stations reach a viewing audience that numbers around two million! Even if only a fraction of that audience stumbles across our video, the numbers are still staggering. I've already

heard from some Hawaiian viewers. One couple, vacationing in Hawaii, happened to be flipping through the television channels in their motel room and came across our video—the Lord works in mysterious ways! It just so happened that they were already Preterists, but they were still excited to see the broadcast, and subsequently ordered copies of the DVD and signed up for *Fulfilled!* Magazine. If you would like to see this scenario repeated in your local area, please contact Dave Warren (see the inside cover for details of the "Preterist Vision Project"). Our thanks to Dave for his untiring efforts in getting Preterist videos broadcast on local stations.

Shortly after I sent the previous issue to the printer, I had my one-year follow-up colonoscopy after my surgery. The doctor said that everything looked great and I don't have to return for three years—I'm cancer free! The doctor said that I'm a "poster boy" for the importance of using colonoscopies to catch colon cancer sooner rather than later. I encourage all readers who are fifty-years old or older, and have not had an initial exam, to contact their healthcare provider and schedule one. For most individuals the preparation is worse than the actual procedure, and the resulting peace of mind is well worth any discomfort. I realize that this sounds like a Public Service Announcement, but I shudder to think of the outcome if I had ignored my doctor's request.

As always, we are grateful for your words of encouragement, your reports on how our video has impacted those with whom you have shared it, your prayers, and your financial support. We are receiving several magazine sign-ups per week, and we hope to continue being able to offer the magazine free of charge.

Blessings,

Brian

As always, we are grateful for your words of encouragement, your reports on how our video has impacted those with whom you have shared it, your prayers, and your financial support.

Mailbag...

Since I was sick today, Easter Sunday, I took the time to watch You've Got to be Kidding...Right? that [was] strongly recommended to me. (I was slow in getting around to watching it, even though I bought 10 copies and have given them to my children and a few friends.) It is incredible!!

Ginny, Florida

I've watched your video "You've Gotta Be Kidding . . . Right?" three times—good stuff!

Laurette, Vermont

Finally! A full Preterist magazine for mass consumption.

Robert, Tennessee

The material in this magazine furthers my Christian understanding of events directly connected with the peace work I and many other Christians do in bringing peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Especially the Palestinian Christians living there. Unfortunately many Christians still feel a Jewish restoration to "their land" is necessary for Christ's second coming. In backing this Jewish venture these "Christians" have no idea of the ongoing suffering they are causing. Fulfilled prophecy is, I believe, the key to peace there. That is why I appreciate your helping me relate these truths to my fellow Evangelists."

Doug, Oregon

I read every issue several times and then keep them for reference. The teaching is great and your humble heart comes through as you minister to the Body of Christ. We have come a long way from hearing the same message Sunday after Sunday to begin to understand the Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. The Lord is so gracious and I am excited about where He is taking us and the understanding that He is revealing to us about His kingdom. Magazines like Fulfilled are certainly part of what God is doing.

Dennis, Maryland

Thanks much for your hard work! I've bought 10 DVD's and have given most away. I believe it's a great way to share the concept of Preterism to the uninformed Futurist.

Curtis, Kansas

This message of fulfillment for Christianity and the world is very important. Thank you for your time and efforts in these matters; it is wonderful.

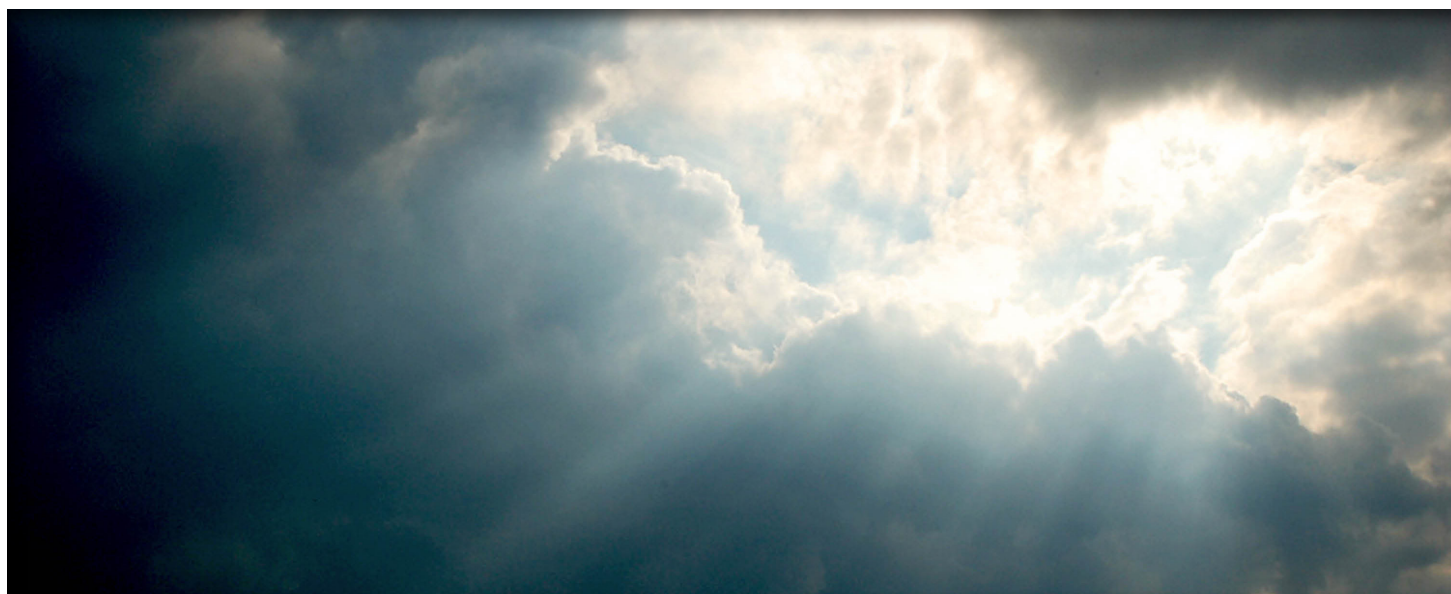
Carol, New Jersey

I'm out of my favorite video - I need 10 more. Enclosed is my check, keep the rest for your ministry.

George, Pennsylvania



This message of fulfillment for Christianity and the world is very important. Thank you for your time and efforts in these matters; it is wonderful.



Perspectives

“Many Preterists are isolated from meaningful fellowship, or feel uncomfortable sitting under Futurist teaching. What advice can you offer?”

Preterists and the Local Church

by David Curtis

Being a Preterist and being involved in a local church is not an easy task if you are not fortunate enough to live in a town that has a Preterist church. Many Preterists are not involved in a local church because they have either been given the “left foot of fellowship,” or they don’t feel comfortable sitting under teaching that denies the words of our Lord Jesus Christ concerning the time of His return. This puts them in a very undesirable position because, as Christians, we need each other. God said, “*It is not good for a man to be alone*” (Gen 2:18). This principle applies to more than just the marriage relationship, because none of us have the spiritual wherewithal to go it alone in our Christian lives:

Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. (Eccl 4:9-10, NASB)

We need each other because that is how the Lord created

us. So what is a Preterist to do about involvement in the local Church? Even if they are uncomfortable sitting under the teaching of Futurist doctrine, my advice is always the same, “Do all you can to find a church that you can live with.” I think this is very important because of what the Bible says about the importance of community. Consider what the writer of Hebrews told believers:

... and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds. . . . (Heb 10:24, NASB)

You thought I was going to use verse 25 didn’t you? Being aware of audience relevance, I recognize that this verse wasn’t written to us, but I do believe that the principle is nevertheless for us. I believe that we still need to be stimulating one another to love and good deeds. In the phrase, “*Let us consider how to stimulate one another*,” the word consider is from the Greek word *katanoëo*, a compound word composed of *kata*, which means “down,” and *noëo*, which means “to exercise the mind.” It has the idea of *thoroughly and carefully noticing*

Perspectives

Preterists and the Local Church

by Joseph Vincent

Question:

Given our “state of the union”—that is, the dilemma of Preterists throughout the world today—how can we seek out unity with one another despite our eschatological differences, and how can we bridge the gap between our Futurist brothers and sisters in Christ without all the drama and divisiveness?

Answer:

First, let me just emphasize the importance of not acting arrogantly toward our Futurist brothers and sisters in Christ. While it can be tempting at times to dismiss them as ignorant (just as they often do to us), we must remember that everyone learns at a different pace, and is at a different place in their life than we are. If you are genuine, humble, and approach another Christian with love and respect and you are shown the door or given the silent treatment, dust

your feet off and move on. On the other hand, if you are invited to join another fellowship, be up front about your views; at the same time, don’t make Preterism a major point of contention. Otherwise, down the road when your views become known, the “true colors” of those whom you thought were your friends and fellow believers in Christ often end up coming out in bold fashion. Most people will love you like a sibling if you are one of them, or think alike, or if you simply avoid controversial issues. But when they find out you are a little different, many times your only recourse is to walk away and never speak to them again. As unfortunate as this may sound, it is often true.

The only way we are ever going to bridge the gap between Futurism and Preterism is if we talk to those people who will listen, and dust off our feet in response to those who attack us or ignore us. Move on! Now, if someone won’t leave you alone, or constantly pursues you or your ministry, you do have a right to defend yourself. However, don’t make it your goal to respond to or defend every attack that comes your

Preterists and the Local Church

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some one or some thing. A good English equivalent would be, “to contemplate.” We are to “thoroughly and carefully notice others,” which is very hard to do in isolation. We can only do this if we are fellowshiping with other Christians.

When God calls us to “consider one another,” He calls us to look to one another’s needs, problems, struggles, and temptations. The spirit of rugged individualism so prevalent in America is wholly incompatible with the church of Jesus Christ. American believers think they have discharged their responsibility to the Lord because they are individually living in holiness, but they are wrong: We are not to look out only for our own lives, but we are to consider others as well. *Christianity is others-oriented!* However, most of us care only about meeting our own needs while we ignore blatantly the

many biblical instructions regarding our responsibility to others. *Do you realize that, individually, you and I are personally responsible for each other’s physical and spiritual welfare?* Do you understand that? Consider just a few of the biblical exhortations to be involved in each other’s lives:

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (Col 3:16, NASB)

Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing. (1 Thess 5:11, NASB)

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the

flesh, but through love serve one another. (Gal 5:13, NASB)

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. (Eph 4:32, NASB)

... and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. (Eph 5:21, NASB)

The kingdom of God is not designed for believers to exist in isolation from each other: We are *interdependent*. We need each other if we are truly going to be what God has called us to be. Each believer has unique abilities and insights that are invaluable for ministering to the Body of Christ. *Christianity is to be lived out in community*, and God has

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way, or else you will be beaten down and disheartened, and that kind of negative attitude will simply wear you out. All you have to do is spend a few minutes on the “anti-Preterist” websites with the primary “few” spending most of their waking hours running “negative” ministries against Full Preterism to realize how miserable it must be to spend all of one’s time trying to attack other people! If people like that would engage in honorable dialogue with other Preterists, having the same heart and desire for truth, the world would be a better place.

Question:

How should modern Preterist Christians deal with being rejected in Futurist churches, or being ostracized by former friends and/or family members over Preterist eschatology?

Answer:

One of the most heartbreaking things that can take place in one’s life is losing a family member or close friend over theological views. As difficult and destructive as this behavior is, there is no way for you to fix or resolve that loss until the other person realizes how

dysfunctional, compulsive, unrealistic, and controlling their actions really are. People who feel the need to hang onto relationships with others who are emotionally abusive suffer from co-dependent behavior. This is self-abuse. While it hurts, the best thing you can do is seek reconciliation by asking the other person to apologize and to genuinely recognize how they have hurt or offended you; however, this rarely happens. If a person refuses to accept you because of your theological views

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Joseph Vincent

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Objection Overruled!

All Nations

by Don Preston

“Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it.” (Zech 12:3)

Objection: Zechariah says “all nations” would (will) be gathered against Jerusalem in the last days. However, only Rome came against Jerusalem in AD 70, therefore, AD 70 cannot be the fulfillment of Zechariah 12.

Response: We truly appreciate the question, and will give some scriptural evidence in response. First of all, underlying the objection is the woodenly literalistic hermeneutic of Dispensationalism. I mean no disrespect in this description; however, the Dispensational hermeneutic is fatally flawed. The cliché, “The Bible says what it means and means what it says” is, in my opinion, overly simplistic. It assumes that the reader is “plugged into” the thought world of the original writer. Yet, in America for instance, the modern reader is thoroughly Grecian in their way of thinking and, lamentably, is almost totally unaware of Hebraic thought. This has a negative impact on Bible interpretation.

Richard Hayes has noted that, “The Christian tradition early on lost its vital connection with the Jewish interpretative matrix in which Paul had lived and moved; consequently, later, Christian interpreters missed some of Paul’s basic concerns” (Richard Hays, *Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel’s Scripture* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005], 43). Tom Holland writes, “While the vocabulary of the [New Testament] could be found throughout the Hellenistic world, it did not have the same meaning when it was used

in the religious sense within the Jewish community” (Tom Holland, *Contours of Pauline Theology* [Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-Shire IV20 1TW, Scotland, UK: Christian Focus Publications 2004], 252). Holland notes that when a New Testament writer wrote in Greek it was, “Hebrew in its mind-set and essential meaning” (ibid., 52). What all of this means is that the modern reader of Scripture must strive to understand what a text meant to its *original audience in its original context*—a critical issue to consider.

Added to all of this is the indisputable fact that the New Testament writers affirmed that the Old Testament prophecies were being fulfilled in their day (Acts 3:23-24) and that they, through the Spirit, were the final and authoritative interpreters of the Old Testament prophecies (1 Peter 1:10-12).

HOW THE BIBLE USES THE TERM “ALL THE NATIONS”

When we read the Scriptures, we must allow the original authors latitude to use language as the Spirit guided them, not as we wish to interpret it. This often demands that we change our way of thinking! Notice the following: In Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar was given his famous vision, and Daniel gave the interpretation. Notice how Daniel described that Chaldean empire and the Grecian empire (kingdom of bronze) which would follow later: “The God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; *and wherever the children of men dwell*, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you are this head of gold. But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth” (Daniel 2:37-39; emphasis added).

Now, if we take a literalistic approach, we must conclude that Nebuchadnezzar ruled the globe, for after all, God gave him dominion over the land wherever animals and birds lived! Birds and animals live in North and South America, don’t they? Well, since God gave Nebuchadnezzar dominion over the entire earth where animals and birds live, we must



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conclude that the Babylonian empire extended to North and South America! Facetious? Of course—and that is the point!

Notice that Daniel also said that the Grecian empire “shall rule over all the earth.” Did the Greeks rule the Americas? Did they rule Russia? No. Does this mean Daniel’s prophecy failed? No. It means that the imposition of a modern cosmology onto the ancient text is wrong.

Could this be what is at work in Zechariah? I think this is clearly the case. Furthermore, we have the context of Zechariah—and the New Testament interpretation—to confirm that Zechariah’s prophecy, no matter what our preconceived ideas might be, was fulfilled in the first century.

THE “IN THAT DAY” REFERENCES OF ZECHARIAH

Our understanding of Zechariah is aided by the prophet’s references to “in that day.” These temporal parameters place fulfillment within the borders of a single generation, the first-century generation. There are, if my count is correct, some nineteen references to “in that day” in Zechariah.

Space prohibits an extensive examination of the “in that day” references. However, notice that the “in that day” references of chapter 12 take us directly back to chapter 11. In chapter 11 we find the betrayal of Jesus at the hands of Judas, who was paid the thirty pieces of silver (Zech 11:12-13). Note also, that YHVH would abandon His covenant “with both houses of Israel” (Zech 11:6-10), when they would eat their own flesh in the siege that was coming.

This is confirmed by Jesus’ application of Zechariah 12:10 to the fall of

Jerusalem (Matt 24:30, 34), and by John’s application of the same verse to the time when “those who pierced him” would look on him and mourn, in the destruction of the city “where the Lord was slain” (Rev 1:7; 11:8). See my book *Who Is This Babylon?* for a detailed discussion of Zechariah.

Now, per Dispensationalism, God never abandons His covenant with Israel. Instead, He delivers them. Thus, Dispensationalism is at odds with the “in that day” references in Zechariah.

Please note: This judgment—when the citizens of Jerusalem would eat the flesh of their own children—was part of the Mosaic Covenant provisions of wrath *for violation of the Mosaic Covenant* (Deut 28:54-57). Here is what is so critical about this fact: *All Dispensationalists agree that the Mosaic Covenant has been abrogated!* Thomas Ice affirms that the Torah was “forever fulfilled and discontinued in Christ” (Thomas Ice/Timothy Demy, *Prophecy Watch* [Eugene: Harvest House, 1998], 258)! Concerning the AD 70 catastrophe, Ice writes, “Those first-century days are called the ‘days of vengeance’ for Jerusalem is under the divine judgment of covenantal sanctions recorded in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. Luke notes that God’s vengeance on His elect nation ‘is in order that all things that are written may be fulfilled.’ Jesus is telling the nation that God will fulfill all the curses of the Mosaic Covenant because of Israel’s disobedience. He will not relent and merely bring to pass a partial fulfillment of His vengeance” (Thomas Ice/Kenneth Gentry, *The Great Tribulation, Past or Future?* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999], 98).

Furthermore, Pentecost claimed, “Eschatological studies are not concerned with . . . the Mosaic

Covenant made by God with man, inasmuch as all these are temporary and non-determinative in respect to future things, but only with the four eternal covenants given by God, by which He has obligated Himself in relation to the prophetic program” (Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1966], 67).

Here is the issue: All millennialists say the Law of Moses has been abrogated. Yet, Zechariah’s predicted assault on Jerusalem was to be the fulfillment of the Mosaic Covenant. Pentecost is patently wrong—Zechariah had to be fulfilled at a time when Torah was still in effect, which means that it cannot be awaiting fulfillment in our future!

Take note again of Ice’s (fatal) admission: “Those first century days are called the ‘days of vengeance’ for Jerusalem is under the divine judgment of covenantal sanctions recorded in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28.” Ice is admitting that the Mosaic Covenant was in effect in AD 70, and that all of the provisions of wrath on Israel for violation of that covenant were fulfilled at that time! Ice’s admission demands that the fulfillment of Zechariah 12-14 was in AD 70. (It is little wonder that Thomas Ice refuses to debate me again. His own admissions are his downfall, DKP).

ROME WAS NOT ALONE!

When our millennial friends take note that Zechariah 12 mentions “all nations of the earth” we are perfectly justified to ask if they believe literally “all” nations of the earth. Do they believe that America will fight against Jerusalem? If not, why not? Do they believe that the seventeen smallest

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Creation to Consummation

The Great Tribulation (Matt 24:21-22)

All These Things Came to Pass (Part 5)

by Ed Stevens

“For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.” (Matt 24:21-22 NKJV)

Thomas Ice and other Premillennial Dispensationalists are quick to assert that the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 was merely a regional conflict focused upon the Jews in Palestine. Because this conflict had no worldwide significance it could not have been *the* Great Tribulation foretold by Jesus. Therefore, Dispensationalists reason that the Great Tribulation still lay in the future.¹

Premillennialist Randall Price, a contributing author to *The End Times Controversy*, reminds us that the Great Tribulation was to be an event such as had “not occurred since the beginning of the creation . . . and never will [again].” Price then notes that the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem was the same kind of event “that had occurred previously (in 722, 605, 589, and 586 BC),” and that “greater disasters have befallen the Jewish people since AD 70 (e.g., six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust).” He reasons, therefore, that AD 70 could not have been the fulfillment of the Great Tribulation foretold in Matthew 24:21 (*ibid.*, p. 362).

Both Ken Gentry and Gary DeMar answer this objection by comparing the language used to describe earlier destructions of Israel and other regional nations in three Old Testament texts (Exod 11:6; Ezek 5:9; and Dan 9:12). Gentry writes, “This unique-event language is common stock-in-trade in prophetic writing. . . . The Old Testament has many such statements that support [the] view that [this] language is hyperbolic.”² DeMar agrees that “The language of Ezekiel 5:9 and Matthew 24:21 is obviously proverbial and hyperbolic.”³ Jesus’ prediction, as recorded in Matthew, would have had the same effect if he had said, “Remember what Ezekiel said about the destruction of Jerusalem in his day? That same kind of destruction is going to happen in this generation!”

Josephus uses nearly identical hyperbolic language in reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70:

. . . the war which the Jews made with the Romans hath been the greatest of all those, not only that have been in our times, but . . . of those that ever were heard of . . . [Wars 1:1 (Preface 1)]

. . . the misfortunes of all men, from the beginning of the world, if they be compared to these of the Jews, are not so considerable as they were . . . [Wars 1:11-12 (Preface 4)]

. . . neither did any other city ever suffer such miseries, nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness than this was, from the beginning of the world. [Wars 5:442 (5.10.5)]

. . . the multitude of those that therein perished exceeded

all the destructions that either men or God ever brought upon the world. [Wars 6:429 (6.9.4)]

Numerous books written from a Futurist perspective, including those written by Amillennialists and Postmillennialists, teach that the Great Tribulation occurred in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, for example, William R. Kimball’s *What the Bible Says about the Great Tribulation: Future or Fulfilled*, Kenneth L. Gentry Jr.’s *The Great Tribulation Past or Future* debate with Thomas Ice, Gentry’s *Perilous Times*, and Gary DeMar’s *Last Days Madness*.⁴

What is not well understood by most of us is that there are at least three phases of tribulation mentioned in our New Testament. As we will see below, only the second of these can be correctly labeled the Great Tribulation. We will identify below exactly what the Great Tribulation was and where it fits into the sequence of endtime events.

In the New Testament, the Greek word for *tribulation* (Gk. *thlipsis*) refers to at least three different periods of persecution or distress:

1. *General persecution on the Church* (AD 30-64): Matt 13:21 (cf. Mk 4:17); Matt 24:9-13; John 16:33; Acts 11:19; 14:22; 20:23; Rom 5:3; 8:35; 12:12; 1 Cor 7:28; 2 Cor 1:4; 1:8; 2:4; 4:17; 6:4; 7:4; 8:2; Eph 3:13; Phil 1:16; 4:14; Col 1:24; 1 Thess 1:6; 3:3; 3:7; 2 Thess 1:4; Heb 10:33; Rev 2:9-10 (cf. Matt 10:16-42). These verses refer to the persecution the Church suffered throughout the period from Pentecost up to the Neronic Persecution.

2. *Great Tribulation on the Church* (AD 64-66): Matt 24:21-29; Rev 1:9; 2:22; Rev 7:14. Comparing all three accounts of the Olivet Discourse (Matt 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21), we can see that the Great Tribulation was that intensification of trouble (the Neronic persecution in AD 64-66) just prior to the Parousia. Matthew 24:29 states that the Parousia occurred “immediately after the [Great] Tribulation.” This extremely intense tribulation did not last long (two years or less), being cut short by the outbreak of the Jewish war against Rome in AD 66, at which time the wrath of God began to be poured out upon the Jews.

3. *Wrath poured out upon the Jews* (AD 66-70): Matt 3:7 (cf. Luke 3:7); Luke 21:22-23; Rom 2:5-10; Rom 5:9 (saints saved from wrath); Rom 9:22; Eph 5:6 (cf. Col 3:6); 1 Thess 1:10 (saints saved from wrath, cf. 1 Thess 5:9); 1 Thess 2:16; 2 Thess 1:6-10; Rev 6:16-17; 11:18; 12:12; 14:8-10; 14:19; 15:1, 7; 16:1, 19; 18:3; 19:15 (cf. Matt 23:29-39). These passages show that the outpouring of God’s wrath began

The Great Tribulation

Studies in Redemptive History

with the Parousia, which occurred “immediately after the tribulation.” The Parousia of Christ was not just a one-day event, but rather a 3½-year-long presence of Christ to effect divine judgment.

Some believe that the troubles encountered by the Jews in their war with Rome were part of the Great Tribulation. While it is true that the Jews did have tribulation during their war with Rome, New Testament writers usually refer to that as “wrath” instead of tribulation. As we can see from the list of verses after each of the three headings above, the word “tribulation” predominantly refers to persecution upon the *Church*. Therefore, the troubles and distresses that the Jews encountered during their war with Rome should more appropriately be referred to as “wrath.” The Tribulation, with its final “Great” phase, was experienced by the Church, not the Jews.

If we were to define the Great Tribulation as the *wrath* outpouring on Jerusalem, that would mean that Christ did not come in judgment upon the Jews until *after* the Romans had destroyed the Jews. However, Christ was supposed to come *before* the wrath was poured out to give relief to his elect who were already suffering in the Great Tribulation. This means that *wrath* and *tribulation* cannot define the same thing. The tribulation has to occur first, before the wrath outpouring.

In His discourses, Jesus explained that the disciples would suffer much *tribulation* in order to spread the Gospel throughout the entire Roman empire (Luke 21:8-28), after which time “the end will come” (Matt 24:14). Some of them would be killed, acts for which their persecutors would be eventually judged (cf. Matt 23:29-39 and Luke 12:46). Toward the end of fulfilling the Great Commission amidst hardship and persecution, there would be a short, but very intense, period of *Great Tribulation* (Matt 24:21-22). This was

the Neronic persecution, which began soon after the fire in Rome (July 18, AD 64), for which Nero blamed Christians (Tacitus, *Annals* 15:44). Tacitus is the main source for information about the Neronic persecution, although Suetonius also hints at it (*Nero* 16). The most surprising silence regarding the fire is that of Josephus, who was in Rome when the fire broke out. Although he remained in Rome for over a year afterwards (during the Neronic persecution), he writes nothing about the fire or the ensuing persecution. B. H. Warmington, puzzled by this silence, supposed it meant that “almost the entire Christian community at Rome was destroyed.”⁵

This intense persecution saw not only the martyrdom of many faithful but also the apostatizing of a significant number of Christian believers, drastically reducing the number of Christians left alive (cf. Matt 24:21-22; Luke 18:6-8). Although Jesus warned the Church that they would suffer tribulation (Matt 24:21-28; cf. Rev 7:14), Paul repeatedly reminded them that they would not have to experience God’s wrath (1 Thess 1:10; Rom 5:9; Matt 3:7; Rom 2:5-8; 1 Thess 5:9). Instead, they would be rewarded (2 Cor 4:17; cf. Matt 5:12;

Rom 8:18) while their enemies were destroyed.

The Great Tribulation (i.e., the Neronic persecution) was a time of testing and purification. It removed the insincere, the lukewarm, the sleepers, and the false brethren from the Church. Those who kept the faith (in life or in death) were rewarded at the Parousia via resurrection and/or rapture. Those who failed the test by lapsing back into Judaism were destroyed with their fellow unbelieving Jews in AD 70. This short period of intense persecution beginning in late AD 64 was “cut short” by the revolt of the Jews against Rome. When the war broke out in late 66, that was a turning point in the Great Tribulation: Both Jews and Romans turned their undivided attention to the war effort. Thus, the Great Tribulation was cut short and the time arrived for God’s wrath to be poured out upon the Jews who had long persecuted the Church. †

All of these helpful resources are available for order on our secure website at www.preterist.org.

This chart illustrates our sequence of the Tribulation and the Wrath.

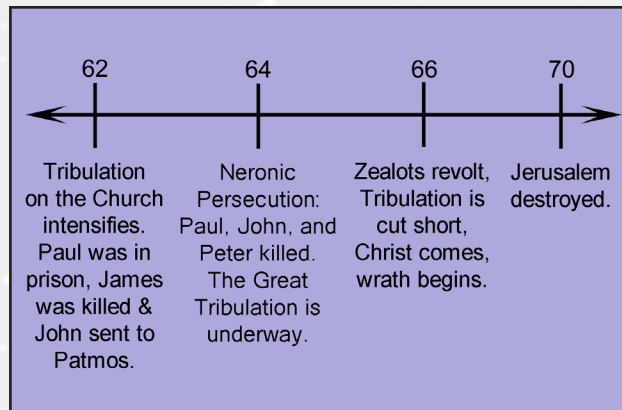
1. Tim LaHaye and Thomas Ice, gen. editors, *The End Times Controversy* [Eugene: Harvest House], 362.

2. Gentry, *Perilous Times* [Texarkana: Covenant Media Press], 67-68.

3. Gary DeMar, *Last Days Madness*, 4th revised edition [Powder Springs: American Vision], 120.

4. The last three books are available from the IPA website: www.preterist.org.

5. B. H. Warmington, *Nero: Reality and Legend*, 127.

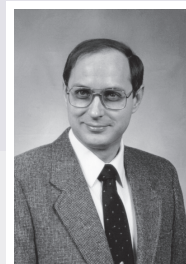


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Preterists and the Local Church

by David Curtis

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created us to be dependent on both Him and one another. Consider what Paul wrote to the believers in Rome:

Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God. (Rom 15:7, NASB)

The word “accept” is the Greek word *proslambano*, which means, “to take to one’s self, to take into friendship.” It is an intense word. It means, “to grant one access to one’s heart, to take into friendship, communion.” Thus, Paul is saying, “take intimately to yourself one another.” Believers, how can we fulfill these “one another” passages if we are not assembling with other believers? We need each other!

So what is a Preterist to do if there is no local Preterist church? My counsel is to find an assembly you can live with and which holds a high view of Scripture. Trust me: No assembly is perfect. Nevertheless, find a church where the people love and esteem the Scriptures. You may very well be able to influence some in that church to consider seriously the Preterist view; then you will have some folks with whom you can fellowship in a more truthful and honest manner. Understand, however, that this will take much patience and wisdom. Let me share some comments from some friends of mine who are not fortunate enough to live near a Preterist church:

Chuck writes, “Preterists in search of fellowship should brace themselves for what is often inevitable—i.e., once church leadership becomes cognizant of our eschatological views, they will, in a best-case scenario, sanction us from positions of influence and, at worst, we may be asked to fellowship elsewhere. I’ve seen it time and time again, and you above all, David, know what it’s like to lose a great deal because you refused to violate your conscience. Even if we as Preterists are committed to every foundationally vital component

of the Christian faith, from Christ’s virgin birth to His bodily resurrection, unfortunately, as things are at the present time, our utmost and highest hope is that we won’t be required to sport the bright red T-shirt with the big ‘H’ on the front and the beloved Hymenaeus’ image on the back.

“I’ve attended the same mega, seeker-friendly church for twelve years, the last five-plus with the same outstanding pastor. This man loves the Lord, is passionate about reaching the lost and he rarely speaks about the end-times. Matter of fact, he’s NEVER preached a full-orbed eschatologically based message. However, most every song and sermon has a distinctively Futurist undertone. Admittedly, if you are as passionate about truth as I am, this can become a source of growing frustration. So, at some point you will be forced to make a decision . . . will you or will you not let the light of Scripture shine before men.

“If you have intentions to coexist as I do, I can guarantee that you will be gently persuaded (or in some cases forced) to mute your views. As gentle and respectful as I have attempted to be, and believe me this has been a conscious, concerted effort desiring above all to maintain body unity, there will come a time, when you, in the normal course of a Bible study, will begin to question their sacrosanct, Futurist eschatological system. At that point, chances are great that you will be asked to keep your thoughts private. In my situation, since I decided to go to the top (because I didn’t want even the appearance of impropriety), I have been treated with the utmost respect. Yet, even though I am NOT considered a heretic at this fellowship—since they know full well that I adhere to the same Gospel—it is clear that I must exchange fellowship for doctrinal silence. So as much as I grieve to admit it, I believe there is a pervading intolerance for views other than the status quo. We must always remember that paradigm shifts are usually as messy as they are scary. And in most cases, unwittingly though I believe it is, truth is sacrificed upon the altar of political expediency. Boat rockers are not met with fondness.

“A person I introduced to Preterism approximately four years ago just

recently left their church. After tirelessly serving the Lord through that church, often putting in twenty-plus hours per week conducting Bible studies, membership classes, and fulfilling various ecclesiastical responsibilities, some insurmountable conflicts arose. The pastor, a relatively young and vivacious partial Preterist, finally took the time to watch Brian Martin’s ‘You’ve Got to Be Kidding, Right?’ This was quite some time after the pastor had been given Behind the Veil of Moses and other Preterist literature, which apparently had not been read. So what happened when this pastor realized the video was in conflict with the creedal statements, ‘He SHALL COME to judge the quick and the dead’ and ‘I believe in the resurrection of the BODY’? All heaven broke loose! Although this person was not immediately asked to leave their church, they were soundly reprimanded by email and relieved of ALL church duties . . . unless of course they would recant this ‘heresy.’ They refused and the rest is history.

“In conclusion, I believe we should continue our passionate quest for truth and be ready to give an answer for the hope that is within us, all while maintaining a genuine attitude of love and respect for those with whom we disagree. If there is ever a severance of fellowship, may it never be because we are belligerent, caustic, or arrogant. Always err on the side of Paul’s admonition to the Philippians, ‘Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as MORE important than yourselves; do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but ALSO for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.’ Easier said than done, yes, but I believe this MUST be our ultimate goal.”

Dru writes, “It seems that many Preterists’ MO [method of operation] is to abandon the local church. I can see why though; after becoming a Preterist it seems that every single verse is taken out of context—the first-century context, that is. I would recommend not going in with an attitude of superiority, thinking that we are Preterists and we

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Preterists and the Local Church

by Joseph Vincent

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without offering a substantive scriptural refutation, an appropriate recourse is to let that person know how much you love them at the same time you make their offense known. You should also tell them that you won't be treated like a slave, or as if you don't have the ability to make mature decisions for yourself. Again, they will probably respond negatively towards you, but you have to make their offense known to them with love and respect.

No one owns you, and no one can ever make you do or think anything you don't want to (at least concerning normal behavior that is within the law). A person who is unwilling to accept or love you for who you are despite your differences isn't a person you need to have in your life anyway. I've had to distance myself a great deal from people who act this way, and while it is hurtful and does not sit well with me, I can't dwell on what other people do—even those I love the most who might have offended me. If someone doesn't want to love you or accept you, the best thing you can do is to allow them to meet their own desires. Pray for them and move on! That kind of dysfunction and drama will only bring you down and cause more friction and trouble. It's unhealthy, and it can lead to much frustration, contributing to health problems, high stress levels, and other factors that impact your life negatively.

Question:

How do modern Preterist Christians, if they are allowed to remain in their Futurist churches, deal with the discomfort and dilemma of sitting under Futurist leadership and teaching? And how can Preterist Christians remain encouraged despite these problems? Is there any light at the end of the tunnel, or alternative methods of discipleship, fellowship, and spiritual growth with

other believers?

Answer:

If you are truly uncomfortable in the church you are in, it is most likely either because you are uneasy about listening to Futurist preaching or teaching, or because you are constantly ignored or given the silent treatment when you desire to speak out or ask questions. If your problem is the former one, hold fast and remember that you likely once held many of these beliefs before coming to Preterism, and that you are still fallible in your doctrine, even as a Preterist! I know the feeling of having to hear messages week after week, only to feel as if you just want to jump up and scream because of what's being taught to the audience. Remember: if God can speak truth through the mouth of a donkey, He can also speak truth through the misinformed pastor of a Futurist church.

The more important and usually more frustrating aspect of attending a Futurist church is the cold shoulder you often receive once they find out you are a Preterist, or even if you simply ask questions on this issue. Often you might be allowed to attend and have fellowship, but you are told not to speak publicly about your views, or you are not allowed to teach or lead any Bible studies that the church facilitates. This would be similar to spanking a child for inappropriate behavior without even allowing the child a moment to consider what it was that they did wrong, or without explaining why the punishment is being administered. The Bible instructs parents to not provoke their children, and the leadership of a church should be wise enough not to do the same to their own members. However, when it does happen, and when you confront the leadership about this, if it is not corrected or dealt with appropriately, your best course of action is to leave that church.

If you were involved in a physically or emotionally abusive relationship outside of the church, wouldn't you seek action to resolve the problem? If the other person won't seek help

or doesn't seek treatment or some resolution to remedy the situation, there is often nothing you can do, and it's better to leave or separate yourself from that situation than to remain in bondage, abuse, and dysfunction. The same is true with church fellowship. If all you get is the cold shoulder, lack of involvement because of the direction of church leadership, or a refusal to have this treatment corrected without a proper attempt by them and yourself to find a proper resolution, then the best course of action may be to simply separate yourself from that church fellowship, and potentially leave it altogether. It may do more harm than good for you to attempt to stay and resolve the conflict. Some conflicts are simply irreversible and will never find a resolution.

If the church staff or elders allow you to remain in fellowship, and they don't frown upon your participation and comments with other Christians who are willing to dialogue with you on the issues of "end times" or "prophecy" or "eschatology," then I would suggest remaining in that fellowship, continuing the dialogue and studying God's Word together (including other topics that are wonderful to study), and enjoying other benefits of that fellowship; such as eating together, assisting those in need from the church or its outreach ministries, attending church events and helping in volunteer roles, and other avenues of fellowship or serving. A church that maintains this attitude towards you, while they may not have their eschatology correct (which does affect many other things), at least has a spirit of love and is genuine enough to realize that not everyone has it all figured out. Enjoy that spirit of acceptance and do as the Bible illustrates for us: "iron sharpens iron." †



Preterists and the Local Church

by David Curtis

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have got it all figured out. I think that is one of the biggest things that turns people off toward us. We need to go into the church like we want everyone else to go into the church, with a Berean-like attitude. If everyone goes in with a know-it-all attitude, we're going to get nowhere fast. The difficult, but mature, thing to do is to let things slide. We need to have an attitude of love and of being a servant first. If we have an attitude of being a servant then we will be able to put our pride away and the things that we don't agree on

will not exasperate us.

"Now I'm not saying we should never speak up; but if we have the proper attitude when we do say something, it is more likely to be received. When we have opportunities, we can ask questions. "What about this? What about that?" I think it is very detrimental and honestly unfair to go into a church with the goal of changing the entire congregation. Trust me, I want to sometimes. I just want to run up on that pulpit and let them have it! But I know that isn't what God wants. I've been going to this church for a while now and I'm making good friends. And I hope that someday I'll be able to share my views with those friends and have a healthy dialog over them. Until that time comes I'm going to enjoy the fellowship and my friends

for what they are."

If you simply cannot find a church you can live with, then try to find a few like-minded families and start your own assembly. Even if no one in your group can teach, you could listen to CDs of some good Preterists teachers. After listening to a CD you can discuss what you heard, pray together, sing together, encourage each other, and thus influence one another.

Fellow Preterist, I would encourage you to do all you can to make it a regular habit of getting together with the saints of God in order to live out the many "one another" injunctions in Scripture. We simply cannot influence people into a more biblically correct theology if we are not getting together with them. †

All Nations

by Don Preston

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nations in the world, most of which have no armies, will join the battle? (<http://geography.about.com/cs/countries/a/smallcountries.htm>). If, after all, one is going to insist that "all nations" means literally every nation on earth, then, to be consistent, one must argue that every South American country, the USA, and every other country on the globe will join in. Personally, I know of no Dispensationalist who actually makes this argument.

Contrary to the claim that only Rome came against Jerusalem in AD 70, Josephus records that Titus had ten cohorts of auxiliary troops from kings of different countries such as Arabia, Syria, and others (Wars, Bk. 4, chapter 4, Whiston, p. 642). In other words, it was the kings of the earth that gathered literally against Jerusalem!

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

It is critical to acknowledge the fact that in Zechariah (and other Old

Testament prophetic books) there is what I call the doctrine of Two Jerusalems (see an in-depth analysis of this in my book *Who Is This Babylon?*). What this means is that in some texts there is a seeming conundrum. On the one hand Jerusalem is destroyed, and yet in the same texts, Jerusalem is delivered! This apparent difficulty is resolved by understanding that there are two Jerusalems: Old Covenant Jerusalem, which was to perish, and the heavenly Jerusalem, which would be delivered (Gal 4:22f; Phil 3; Heb 12; Rev). This view explains the situation in Zechariah—the Old Jerusalem would indeed be desolated, in the final outpouring of Mosaic Covenant wrath, yet the Jerusalem that is above, the true Jerusalem, would be delivered, and it would be in her that deliverance, the fountain for cleansing from sin, would be opened for salvation (Zech 13:1f). Cyril of Alexandria (late 4th century), commenting on Isaiah 51 and the Comfort of Zion, alludes to this: "The Holy prophets always use the language of the visual and sensory images to signify spiritual things beyond the senses. Sure then, if Isaiah says Zion (51:3), he is not thinking of the earthly city. Rather one should understand Zion to mean the spiritual city, the

Church of the living God. For how else can one understand the prophet's words actually to have been fulfilled? God promised to comfort her, but this did not happen to the earthly city. On the contrary, we see that the city has been stripped bare and destroyed. Therefore the prophet's words have come to pass among the great number of believers, that is, the church of the living God" (cited in *The Church's Bible, Isaiah, Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007], 393).

Zechariah's prophecy demands that it was fulfilled in the first century, "in that day" when they ate the flesh of their own children. The context demands that the prophecy was fulfilled at a time when the Mosaic Law was still in effect. The judgment described is Mosaic Covenant wrath. The "kings of the earth" did in fact support Rome's assault. Finally, the doctrine of the Two Jerusalems demands the passing of the Old Jerusalem, but the deliverance of the New Covenant Jerusalem. This happened in AD 70. Therefore, the Objection is Overruled! †

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 Milton S. Terry's **Biblical Hermeneutics**, circa 1890. In these excerpts Terry addresses the concept of "double-fulfillment," a device which is often employed to allow the future fulfillment of prophecies which were obviously fulfilled in our past.

The hermeneutical principles which we have now set forth necessarily exclude the doctrine that the prophecies of Scripture contain an occult or double sense. It has been alleged by some that as these oracles are heavenly and divine we should expect to find in them manifold meanings. They must needs differ from other books. Hence has arisen not only the doctrine of a double sense, but of a threefold and fourfold sense, and the rabbis went so far as to insist that there are "mountains of sense in every word of Scripture." We may readily admit that the Scriptures are capable of manifold practical applications; otherwise they would not be so useful for doctrine, correction, and instruction in righteousness (2 Tim 3:16). But the moment we admit the principle that portions of Scripture contain an occult or double sense we introduce an element of uncertainty in the sacred volume, and unsettle all scientific interpretation.

"If the Scripture has more than one meaning," says Dr. Owen, "it has no meaning at all." "I hold," says Ryle, "that the words of Scripture were intended to have one definite sense, and that our first object should be to discover that sense, and adhere rigidly to it To say that words do mean a thing merely because they can be tortured into meaning it is a most [dishonorable] and dangerous way of handling Scripture" (*Expository Thoughts on St. Luke*, vol. I, p. 383). "This scheme of interpretation," says Stuart, "forsakes and sets aside the common laws of language. The Bible excepted, in no book, treatise, epistle, discourse, or conversation, ever written, published, or addressed by any one man to his fellow beings (unless in the way of

sport, or with an intention to deceive), can a double sense be found . . ."

Some writers have confused this subject by connecting it with the doctrine of type and antitype. As many persons and events of the Old Testament were types of greater ones to come, so the language respecting them is supposed to be capable of a double sense. . . .

But it should be seen that in the case of types the language of the Scripture has no double sense. The types themselves are such because they prefigure things to come, and this fact must be kept distinct from the question of the sense of language used in any particular passage. . . .

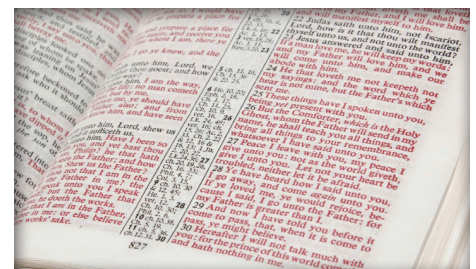
The precious words of promise to God's people find more or less [fulfillment] in every individual experience. But these facts do not sustain the theory of a double sense. The sense in every case is direct and simple; the applications and illustrations are many. Such facts give no authority for us to go into apocalyptic prophecies with the expectation of finding two or more meanings in each specific statement, and then to declare: This verse refers to an event long past, this to something yet future; this had a partial [fulfillment] in the ruin of Babylon, or Edom, but it awaits a grander [fulfillment] in the future. The judgment of Babylon, or Nineveh, or Jerusalem, may, indeed, be

a type of every other similar judgment, and is a warning to all nations and ages; but this is very different from saying that the language in which that judgment was predicted was fulfilled only partially when Babylon, or Nineveh, or Jerusalem fell, and is yet awaiting its complete [fulfillment]

To assume, in the absence of any hint, that we have an enigma, and in the face of explicit statements to the contrary, that any specific prophecy has a double sense, a primary and a secondary meaning, a near and a remote [fulfillment], must necessarily introduce an element of uncertainty and confusion into biblical interpretation.

The same may be said about explicit designations of time. When a writer says that an event will shortly and speedily come to pass, or is about to take place, it is contrary to all propriety to declare that his statements allow us to believe the event is in the far future. It is a reprehensible abuse of language to say that the words *immediately*, or *near at hand*, mean *ages hence*, or *after a long time* (pp.493-496). †

"...To say that words do mean a thing merely because they can be tortured into meaning it is a most [dishonorable] and dangerous way of handling Scripture."



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local church

"All Nations" - would
be gathered against
Jerusalem

The Great Tribulation

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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
Preterism
Preterism

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