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Scenes from the 2011 *Evangelical Theological Society* Conference held in November.

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Dale Stanford, Ed Stevens, and Brian Martin in “The Preterist Booth.”

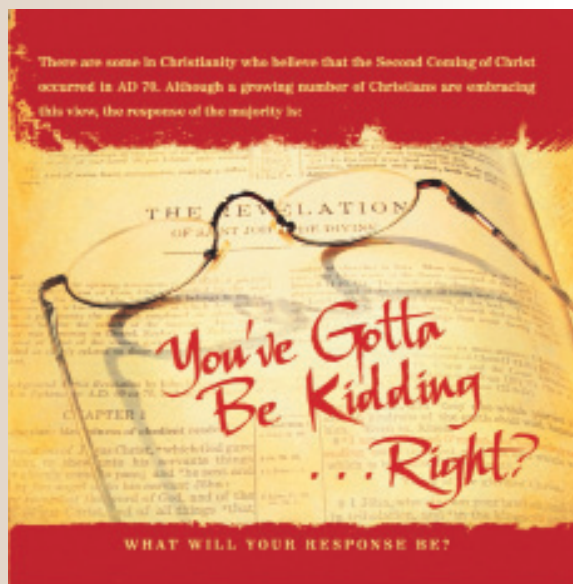


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Editor's Note...

 November marked the 63rd edition of the *Evangelical Theological Society* (ETS) conference, held this year in San Francisco. FCG joined Ed Stevens of the *International Preterist Association* and Michael Loomis of *AD70.net* (preterist internet radio) in the “Preterist Booth” at the exhibition hall (pictures in this issue are from the ETS and a subsequent preterist get-together). It was great getting to spend time with Ed (whom my wife and I met at Kurt Simmons’ 2006 Carlsbad conference) and to finally meet Michael in person. Edmund Lee, from the New Orleans area, also attended the full conference, and several other local preterists dropped in for shorter periods. After wrapping things up at the conference on Friday, Ed, Edmund, and Michael met at my house that evening and we recorded a two-hour podcast reflecting on and discussing our various ETS experiences. (I believe that the podcast aired in place of Ed Stevens’ normal *Then and Now* program—you should be able to find it archived on AD70.net.) The next day Garrett and Beverly Brown graciously opened their home to host a get-together for preterists in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. Twenty-five “local” preterists enjoyed a time of food, fellowship, and a Q&A session with Ed Stevens.

In addition to the ETS exhibition hall, there were literally hundreds of lectures delivered over the course of the three-day event. All the booth workers took turns working the booth and attending lectures. I had mixed emotions about working in the booth. On one hand, I was relieved that there was no hostility exhibited toward the preterist view. To the contrary, several preterists dropped by the booth to chat and encourage us. The nonpreterists with whom I had conversations seemed genuinely interested. On the other hand, I was disappointed by the overall lack of interest that I perceived. Most people just glanced at our “The Preterist Booth” banner and continued walking. Some would smile, and I saw a few smirks. Many, upon realizing the theme of the booth, appeared to want to avoid

eye contact and quickly moved on.

Upon reflecting on my ETS experience and the experiences of past ETS conferences that Ed shared, it seems to me that Christianity has become much more aware of the existence of the preterist view—especially theologically minded Christians. However, awareness doesn’t equate with understanding. It’s easy to be aware of preterism and summarily dismiss it. I watched one couple walking down the aisle, and when the husband (I assume) saw our banner, he stopped and began whispering in his wife’s ear, “Those are the people . . .” I can only imagine how he defined preterism to her, but based upon her facial expressions I got the impression she was thinking, “Oh, those poor people.” While a surface understanding of preterism may be easy to summarily dismiss, it’s not so easy to summarily dismiss over one hundred New Testament timing statements that place the Second Coming in the first-century generation. Yet who has the time to review one hundred passages during a brief conversation? I’m beginning to think that, when it comes to interacting with those who have already dismissed preterism, my tact shouldn’t be trying to explain all the timing statements to them, but asking *them* to explain the statements to *me*. After all, we are much more likely to admit that our theology needs some tuning-up if we come to that conclusion ourselves rather than being told by someone else, aren’t we?

October marked the last issue of John Bray’s *Biblical Perspectives* newsletter, which has blessed many people for many years, and done much in sharing the preterist view. At 89 years old, it is understandable that John needs to retire his newsletter. Nevertheless, we are saddened to see it come to an end and pray for God’s blessings upon John and Evelyn’s “post-newsletter” years.

As always, we are humbled and grateful for your prayerful and financial support.

Blessings,

Brian

... it’s not so easy to summarily dismiss over one hundred New Testament timing statements ...

Mailbag...

After having reviewed this website, I feel certain that there is a place for faith in my life. For too long I have suffered the ability to read the New Testament in plain English and seeing how plain the prophecy states that all the things that will pass have already passed.

Anonymous, CA

Thank you for *Fulfilled!* Magazine, keep up the excellent articles and may the Lord continue to bless your efforts in every way.

Don, MI

Wish I knew about the preterist view decades ago. I am very thankful to get your fine magazine.

David, IL

The Lord bless you with all your endeavors.

Garrett & Beverly, CA

Thank you very much for the great work you do in teaching preterism and exposing the true meaning of

end time prophecy. I hope and pray that the Lord will be good to you and helps you produce the video planned in response to John MacArthur's charges against preterism and his inconsistent eschatology.

George, VA

Thank you for *Fulfilled!* Magazine in recent years, it's always an inspiration to read. I am saddened that so few in Australia understand the preterist view of the Bible. It's great to meet and talk on the phone to the few I've met who have similar thoughts.

Joan, Australia

May our Lord bless you and your family. Please keep up the good work! We love the work you are doing to reach the world and share Truth!

Norm & Jeannie, ID

Thank you for *Fulfilled!* Magazine, enjoy it each time.

Mary, TX



Wish I knew about
the preterist view
decades ago.



How Do Preterists View the Kingdom of Christ?

by Kurt Simmons

Those who look for a future consummation of God's kingdom typically believe that it will involve the modern state of Israel and the restoration of the Davidic throne, which will extend over the entire earth. They believe that God's kingdom entails Jesus reigning over earth *from earth* while seated upon an *earthly throne*. This notion grows out of the fact that David once reigned over an earthly kingdom, the capital city of which was the ancient city of Jerusalem. Since Christ was prophesied to be the restorer of the Davidic throne, they suppose that Christ must also reign from earth, with his governmental seat in Jerusalem. But this mistakes the case entirely.

When our first ancestor sinned, God promised a "Seed"—a kinsman redeemer—to save the race. God told the serpent:

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen 3:17)

This prophecy, known as the "protevangelium," occupies two levels: On a spiritual level, it looked to the defeat of sin and death. The serpent—a personification of the power of sin and death—would bruise Christ's heel by Jesus' crucifixion. But Christ would crush the head of sin and death in his

atoning sacrifice and resurrection. On an earthly level, the prophecy describes the enmity between the woman (God's people) and the serpent (the church's enemies). Christ would bring victory to his people, delivering them out of the power of their enemies. Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, touched upon this latter aspect of Christ's appearance in his "song":

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us . . . that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear." (Luke 1:68-75)

It is in Christ's deliverance of his people from their enemies that the "kingdom" exists and is realized. However, it is important that we keep both ends of the protevangelium in view. Those who look for a future earthly King and kingdom typically lose sight of the fact Jesus was sent into the world to die for the world's sin. Classic dispensationalism teaches that Jesus came to establish an earthly kingdom but, when the Jews rejected Him and had Him nailed to a cross, the Church age

Perspectives

The Kingdom

by Alan Bondar

Preterism, in contrast to futurism, recognizes that the spiritual kingdom of God fulfills—and even supersedes—the physical, earthly types in their entirety. The spiritual realities of God's kingdom came to the fore when all things related to the Old Covenant system came to an end (1 Pet 4:7). So the natural was first, and then the spiritual (cf. 1 Cor 15:42-46). Not only do the Scriptures nowhere teach a return to the natural order of things, neither do the Scriptures teach an end to the physical. Many people are unaware that there is a crucial and distinct difference between the *natural* and the *physical*, for these two concepts are not synonymous. The *natural* is as distinct from the physical as *spiritual* is. While both have expression in the physical realm, *natural* and *spiritual* have to do with modes of living, not modes of physics and metaphysics.

According to Paul in Galatians 5, in this physical life one lives either *according to the flesh* or *according to the Spirit*. Paul likewise states in 1 Corinthians 2 that in this physical life one can be either natural or spiritual. *Natural*, therefore, describes a physical life lived according to the flesh, and *spiritual* describes a physical life lived according to the Spirit, although neither are limited to the physical. The existence of a spiritual kingdom does not necessitate that the benefits of that kingdom manifest themselves only in the spiritual realm. In fact, living in God's spiritual kingdom has definite physical ramifications, just as living in accordance with a natural kingdom has effects in the physical realm. This is an important concept to grasp.

The two kingdoms can be contrasted this way: Living according to the flesh—that is, in accordance with a *natural* kingdom—means attempting to attain righteousness by the outward works of the Mosaic Law. To be under the Old Covenant was to live under the curse of sin and death, which came as a result of living under bondage to the Law (Rom 8:2). Attaining righteousness

of God here on earth, preterism believes that we live
remise, how would you describe the kingdom of God?

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was introduced as a “stop gap” measure until the Jews finally accept Jesus as the Christ (Messiah) and convert en masse. Jesus will then establish His earthly kingdom, introducing a millennial paradise of peace on earth. Dispensationalism’s concept of Christ as king upon earth should be contrasted with the prophet Daniel’s depiction of Christ’s coronation:

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, and all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” (Dan 7:13-14)

Kingdom Received at Christ’s Ascension

Notice that Daniel’s prophecy places Christ’s coronation at his *ascension*, not His incarnation or Second Coming. Jesus’ death upon a Roman cross was *foreknown and foreordained* by God; the cross and church of Christ were not “stop gap” measures resulting from the Jews’ rejection of Jesus, but God’s *eternal purpose* to save His people (Isa 53; Acts 2:23; cf. Luke 24:46-47; Eph 3:10-11). The seat of Jesus’ kingdom was never intended to be upon earth, but had always been established *in heaven*, situated at the right hand of God. Thus, the reign of Jesus from heaven is depicted throughout Scripture. This is particularly true of the “resurrection” Psalms. Psalm 2 describes the murder of Christ and the victory of Jesus through His resurrection and ascension. In Jesus’ resurrection, God “begat” Him as

a Son, setting Him up as king upon His “holy hill of Zion” (heavenly Jerusalem), and giving Him the kingdoms of the world for His inheritance, which He rules with a rod of iron:

“Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” (Ps 2:8-9; cf. Rom 1:4)

Psalm 110 similarly describes Christ’s rule from God’s right hand in heaven:

“The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.” (Ps 110:1-2)

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What is “The Kingdom”?

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by living according to the Spirit—that is, in accordance with God’s *spiritual* kingdom introduced by the New Covenant—is accomplished by faith in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The only way to enter God’s spiritual kingdom—the only kingdom that the Scriptures ever link with the New Covenant—is by spiritual regeneration (John 3:3), which leads to faith.

The Old Covenant was written on tablets of stone, whereas the New Covenant is written on our hearts (2 Cor 3). While both covenants affect the physical person, one covenant

is seen and the other is unseen. The problem with the Old Covenant is that it was a temporary and fading covenant (Heb 8:13). It served as a *type* of the New Covenant, and was given to display how the permanence of the New Covenant was to be established, just as a child matures into adulthood. The New Covenant did away with the Old Covenant ultimately because the fullness of the Spirit has been poured out upon all mankind.

The Old Covenant can be compared to a canteen full of water. The water is what you want, but

the water must be contained in something in order for it to be drunk. You can try to eat the canteen to get to the water, but that would be very difficult, and you will probably die of dehydration before you succeed. You can open the canteen and drink from it, but you must do so time and time again because you will become thirsty repeatedly. Even then, once the canteen is empty it must be refilled; a bigger canteen would also need refilling eventually. A better provision would be to replace the canteen with a new container that

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The Kingdom

by Alan Bondar

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perpetually produces a spring of living water no matter where you are.

The body of Adam was like a canteen, and the corporate body of Israel was just a bigger canteen holding the same water. In contrast, the body of Christ is the new vessel that perpetuates a spring of living water no matter where you are. And this is the difference between the natural body of flesh and the spiritual body of faith. The Spirit—not the letter—of the Law has always been God's goal. The visible, physical canteen has been done away with and the Law is now written spiritually on invisible hearts, bringing with it the power to obey perpetually.

To believe that the New Covenant is a never-ending, invisible covenant

while at the same time believing that the spiritual kingdom associated with it will, one day, be visible again is in direct contradiction to the testimony of Scripture. To take the spiritual kingdom of God and turn it into a visible, physical kingdom with geographical limitations is to once again necessitate obedience through means of an external taskmaster—a visibly present Christ who rules with a literal iron rod. In this scenario, the power to obey comes from the canteen itself.

But why would Christ need to rule with a literal iron rod? Why would anyone want to return to that type of bondage? Perhaps they believe that Christ should (and will) whip everyone into shape. They believe this to be the blessed hope of Christianity, that we will return to an earthly theocracy in which obedience is caused by the imposition of an external force, just like all other earthly governments impose their will within the territory under their jurisdiction? That sounds a lot like national Israel under the Old Covenant, wanting a king like all the other nations (1 Sam 8). It was a bad idea then, and it is still a bad idea.

Some may try to argue with this and say that it is not what futurism teaches. However, the fact remains that if the spiritual kingdom in which we now live is not the permanent kingdom, then the nature of the supposed future, visible kingdom would be ruled through the promulgation of codified laws, the use of literal scepters, and the exercise of external force. After all, a kingdom of a different nature demands different means of rule.

Futurism is simply a system that does not work. It forces upon the Scriptures a physical kingdom that Christ never came to offer. Futurism is so rooted in man-made tradition that

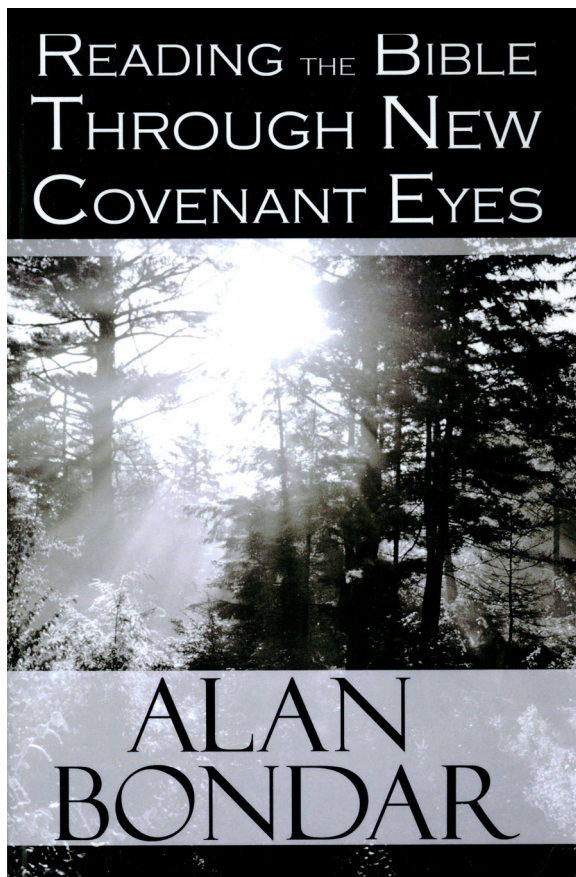
it cannot make proper sense of the kingdom of God. Amillennarians recognize the problem, but being bound by tradition, they nevertheless maintain that the glory of the kingdom in which we now live will eventually give way to a future kingdom of a different nature.

Why do many Christians tend to look for a kingdom different than the one that Christ has established? Christ's kingdom is one of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom 14:17). Because the Holy Spirit dwells in us, we do not have to go to either "this mountain" or to "Jerusalem" to worship (John 4:21). Yet futurism desires to return us to a geographical mode of worship. Even though we currently have access to the King of Kings regardless of our location, for some reason, in the future, we will have to physically go someplace to be in His presence, since He will be sitting on a literal throne. It is this ill-conceived doctrine that promulgates the need for biologically, glorified bodies. Yet the Scriptures nowhere teach such a concept.

This is the greatest hope of Christianity? To the contrary, the greatest hope of Christianity was fulfilled when Christ established His reign (Matt 28:18) and subdued all of His enemies under His feet (1 Cor 15:23-28). This is the kingdom that Jesus offered: a kingdom not of this realm (John 18) that remains in operation today and forevermore! It is a kingdom guided by the permanent, invisible, and indestructible nature of the New Covenant.

So what does a spiritual kingdom look like? It looks like the footstool of God. Unfortunately, most people do not recognize that being the footstool of God is a good thing. Under the feet of God is usually where the bad people are thought to be, but the Scriptures teach otherwise. Here are just a few Old Testament verses that reveal the sacred nature of God's footstool:

Then King David rose to his feet and said: "Hear me, my brothers and my people. I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD and



for the footstool of our God, and I made preparations for building.” (1 Chronicles 28:2)

Exalt the LORD our God; worship at his footstool! Holy is he! (Psalm 99:5)

The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.” (Psalm 110:1)

Let us go to his dwelling place; let us worship at his footstool! (Psalm 132:7)

How the Lord in his anger has set the daughter of Zion under a cloud! He has cast down from heaven to earth the splendor of Israel; he has not remembered his footstool in the day of his anger. (Lamentations 2:1)

The footstool of God is His Temple. It's where His people worship! God not remembering His footstool in the day of his anger is a bad thing, not a good thing. This was a dreadful proclamation. To be under Christ's feet—to be his footstool—was what the saints hoped for. Psalm 110:1 is quoted in Hebrews 1:13, but consider Hebrews 1:13-14 together:

And to which of the angels has he ever said, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”? Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

Why would the writer of Hebrews



connect Psalm 110:1 with inheriting salvation? Because inheriting salvation and being the footstool of Christ are synonymous concepts. And since the footstool of God is the Temple, and the New Covenant people of God are the Temple of God, then being the footstool of God in the New Covenant is a spiritual—not a fleshly—reality.

And this is why the people of God no longer worship on “this mountain” or in “Jerusalem.” We are in the New Jerusalem now, where God's footstool always has been and always will be. Therefore, to seek again a physical, geographical Jerusalem is to seek yet another Jerusalem, much like the one about which Paul speaks negatively in Galatians 4:25-26:

Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother.

The geographical Jerusalem was under slavery to the Mosaic Law. The Jerusalem above is free. To be sure, we live in freedom now in the Jerusalem from above, yet many futurists hope for a day in which we return to a geographical Jerusalem much like the Jews were looking for in the first century. Yet notice what Paul wrote about those who were seeking a fleshly kingdom:

But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also. But what does the Scripture say? “CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON, FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE AN HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREE WOMAN.” So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman. (Gal 4:29-31)

Those who were holding onto a Jerusalem according to the flesh were persecuting those who were looking for a spiritual Jerusalem—the only kingdom that the Scriptures proclaim. Which kingdom are you seeking? †



Creation to Consummation

Who Was the Man of Sin? (2 Thessalonians 2:3-12)

by Ed Stevens

“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 (NKJV)”



ary DeMar, Ken Gentry, Jr., David Chilton, and others believe the Man of Sin was Nero. On the other hand, John Bray, whose little booklet *The Man of Sin* is well worth your study, believes he was John of Gischala. Like Bray, I too see the Man of Sin as a Jewish Zealot leader.

The reason I do not subscribe to the Neronian theory is because of the explicit Jewish character with which Paul describes the Man of Sin in 2 Thessalonians. Paul stated the Man of Sin would set himself up in the temple as if he was God. Nero never set foot in Judea, much less in Jerusalem's temple, nor was his image ever set up in the temple. So, we need another candidate who might have set himself up in the temple as if he was God.

It is also worth mentioning that Paul identifies the Man of Sin as a single individual, in contrast with the apostle John who referred to “many antichrists” (1 John 2:18-27; 4:3-5; and 2 John 7). Furthermore, John describes these “antichrists” as having formerly been a part of the church, before “they went out from us.” They were “deceivers” and “false apostles.” The Man of Sin can not be the same as these “antichrists” since there is no indication that the Man of Sin was ever a part of the Church.

Paul provides over a dozen different characteristics by which to identify the Man of Sin, several of which paint him as a Jewish figure in close connection with the temple or priesthood: He would “sit in the temple of God”; break the Law completely; oppose everyone else; exalt himself above God and the Law; delude his followers with false signs and wonders; engage in utter wickedness; end up being slain and brought to an end by the breath of Christ's mouth at the Parousia. These qualifications limit the field of possible Jewish candidates to the following individuals: Ananus II, Eleazar b. Ananias, Menahem b. Judas, and John of Gischala. While there are a few fingers pointing at Ananus, Menahem, and John, none of them fit the qualifications as precisely as Eleazar, the son of Ananias.

When the Roman Procurator Gessius Florus brought his soldiers to Jerusalem to confiscate all the gold from the Temple (May AD 66), Yosippon writes that it was

a brash young man, Eleazar, who blew the shofar in Jerusalem and rallied the citizens to block the lanes of the city. Eleazar then seized control of the temple and used it as his fortress (in violation of the Law) from that point forward. Shortly thereafter, the angelic armies were seen in the clouds over Palestine, signaling that the Son of Man had arrived to begin His judgment (May-June AD 66).

A couple of months later, Eleazar illegally stopped the daily sacrifices of all Gentiles (Aug AD 66). This was totally unprecedented, monstrous, and lawless. Never had Gentile sacrifices and offerings been refused. At the very time God was grafting the Gentiles into His Church, the Zealots were breaking off all religious contact with the Gentiles—quite a contrast! The moderate Jewish leadership and priests all reminded Eleazar that to do such a thing would be to set himself above the Law. They demanded that he restore the sacrifices, but he defiantly refused.

Eleazar was the son of Ananias b. Nedebaeus, who was the high priest when 2 Thessalonians was written, as well as four years later, in AD 58, during Paul's trial in Jerusalem (Acts 23). It was Ananias who ordered that Paul be struck on the mouth. Upon being struck, Paul predicted, “God is about to strike you,” and then called him a law-breaker. As was the father (lawbreaker), so was the son (an even worse lawbreaker). Eight years later, in September of AD 66, Ananias was “struck” dead by the Zealot leader Menahem, immediately after which Eleazar used his own soldiers to avenge his father by killing Menahem and his soldiers in the temple, again in violation of the Law. Thus, Eleazar opposed every other Zealot leader and exalted himself above them all.

As Yosippon indicates (*Yosippon*, Chapters 72, 75), Eleazar was the one who literally “sat in the temple” controlling all the affairs of the temple, priesthood, and sacrifices, and used the Temple as his fortress during nearly the entire war, beginning in April AD 66. Just before Titus began the siege, Eleazar was overpowered by John of Gischala, and his troops merged with John's. According to Yosippon (Chapters 82, 89), Eleazar b. Ananias then fled with some of his companions to Masada, where he remained until General Silva



Studies in Redemptive History

conquered it by battering and burning its gates. This is also confirmed in *Hegesippus* (Book V, Chapter 53). Eleazar's flight to Masada explains why Josephus lost track of him after John captured the temple (see *Wars* 5.6.1. in Whiston).

Paul stated in 2 Thessalonians 2:8 that the Lord Jesus would slay the Lawless One "by the breath of His mouth." In the previous chapter (2 Thess 1:7) Paul had predicted that Christ would come "in flaming fire dealing out retribution" to their persecutors. Here, at the conquering of Masada, we see the "breath of His Mouth" driving the "flaming fire" which destroyed their final defenses against the Romans:

This work of theirs was like a real edifice; and when the machines were applied, the blows were weakened by its yielding When Silva saw this, he thought it best to [destroy] this wall by setting fire to it; so he gave order . . . and when it was once set on fire, its hollowness made that fire spread to **a mighty flame**. . . . after this, on a sudden the wind changed into the south, as if it were **done by divine Providence**; and blew strongly the contrary way, and carried the flame, and drove it against the wall, which was now on fire through its entire thickness. So the Romans, having now **assistance from God**, returned to their camp with joy, and resolved to attack their enemies the very next day . . . [but when Eleazar] saw their wall burnt down by the fire, and could devise no other way of escaping, or room for their farther courage, and setting before their eyes what the Romans would do to them, their children, and their wives, if they got them into their power,

he consulted about having them all slain. (*Wars* 7:314-321/7.8.5-6; emphasis added)

The words of 2 Thessalonians 2:8 do not fit the fate of the other Jewish characters we have mentioned. We know that Ananias b. Nedebaeus, Menahem, and Ananus II were all killed during the war. Simon b. Giora and John of Gischala both surrendered to Titus and were taken to Rome to be displayed in the triumphal return of the Roman army. After being dragged through a crowd and tormented, Simon was finally killed, while John of Gischala was imprisoned in Rome for the rest of his life. However, 2 Thessalonians 2:8 states that the Man of Sin would be *slain* (Gk. *anairo*), a word that is used 451 times in the works of Josephus describing all the slaughters and killings that occurred during the war. This same word was also used by Josephus three times in the context of the suicide killings in Masada at the end of the war (AD 73):

So they being not able to bear the grief they were under for what they had done any longer [by slaying all their families], and esteeming it an injury to those they had **slain** [Gk. *anairo*] to live even the shortest space of time after them (*Wars* 7:394/7.9.1; emphasis added)

. . . and when these ten had, without fear, slain them all, they made the same rule for casting lots for themselves, that he whose lot it was should first kill the other nine, and after all, should **kill** [Gk. *anairo*] himself (*Wars* 7:396/7.9.1; emphasis added)

. . . when he perceived that they were all **slain** [Gk. *anairo*], he set fire to the palace, and with the

great force of his hands ran his sword entirely through himself, and fell down dead near to his own relations. (*Wars* 7:397/7.9.1; emphasis added)

Eleazar died at Masada with 960 others in a final suicide pact, slain by his own soldiers. The zealot leader who was "the originator of the disturbance" (*Hegesippus* v. 53) was also the last to be slain. This explains why Titus sent Silva to Masada with such a large force: to make sure the last remaining remnants of the rebellion were completely crushed. Titus was determined to not let Eleazar (the original instigator of the rebellion) escape to fight another day.

The point that we must not miss here is that Eleazar seems to be the only one who fulfilled all the characteristics of the Man of Sin that are mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2. He was the one who blew the shofar and started the war. He was the only one who "sat in the temple" and took the law into his own hands by stopping the Gentiles' daily sacrifices. Neither John of Gischala nor Ananus II ever had control of the Temple during the war. John of Gischala only gained control of it at the very end when the siege began (May AD 70), when holding the Temple no longer mattered. Although both John of Gischala and Ananus II were guilty of many lawless acts, none were so lawless as what Eleazar did by polluting the Temple and stopping the daily sacrifices. Eleazar far exceeded his contemporaries in lawlessness. It appears then, that the Lawless One/Man of Sin was indeed forced to slay himself when his last hope of defense was destroyed by the breath of our Lord's mouth. ☩

Objection Overruled!

Literal Fulfillment of Old Testament Messianic Prophecies

by Don Preston, D. Div.

Objection: *Preterists place the context of Zechariah 14 in the first century. Yet Zechariah prophesied “Then everyone who survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Booths. And if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, there will be no rain on them.” Since we do not see this occurring, how can preterists claim that this prophecy is fulfilled?*

As always, we appreciate questions, and even objections from the readers of *Fulfilled!* Magazine. Let’s take a look at this objection. First of all, take note that the objection is taking a lot for granted, without offering any proof. The objection ignores the typological nature of the Jewish feast days. As a result of the first assumption, it is assumed that the Feast of Tabernacles in Zechariah is referent to the observance of the literal Feast of Tabernacles. The objection ignores the actual context of the promise in Zechariah, and the objection likewise ignores the New Testament application of Zechariah.

My dispensational friends overlook, or ignore, the typological nature of the Jewish feast days. They seem to believe that the literal feast days were the substance—the reality of what God desired (desires).

However, as I discuss extensively in my book, *Like Father Like Son, On Clouds of Glory*, the Bible is more than clear that the feast days were not the goal of God’s scheme. JHVH said that animal sacrifices, which stood at the foundation of the feast days, were never what He desired:

“Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come— In the volume of

the book it is written of Me—To do Your will, O God.’” Previously saying, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the law), then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He takes away [literally, “is taking away”] the first that He may establish the second. (Heb 10:5-9).

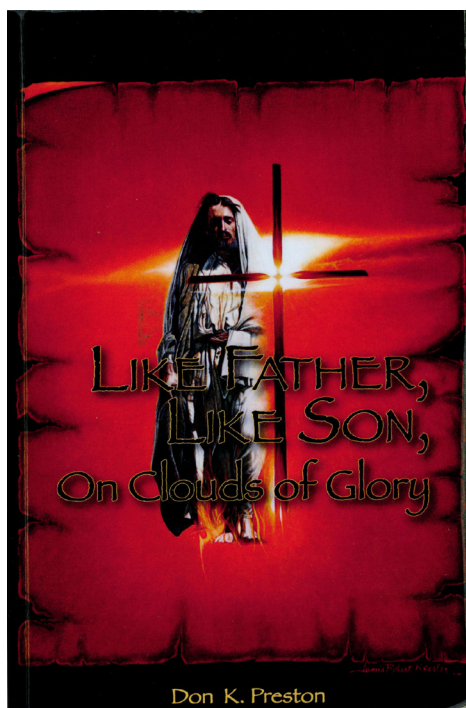
Notice that God said He never had pleasure in animal sacrifices! Yet, we are supposed to believe that His ultimate goal is to restore them in the millennial temple! This alone should cause us to be cautious in positing a literalistic fulfillment of the observance of Tabernacles in Zechariah.

Not only did God say that He never had pleasure in those animal sacrifices, He sent His Son to take them away through His own sacrifice. And through the power of His sacrifice, Jesus was, when Hebrews was written, taking those sacrifices away. The Old Covenant which mandated those sacrifices was “*nigh unto passing*” (Heb 8:13).

The question therefore presses itself in on us: If God never desired or even took pleasure in animal sacrifices, why in the world would He re-establish them, after once abolishing them by bringing in the very thing that those sacrifices foreshadowed? This truly would be illogical.

So, the objection denies the typological nature of the Old Testament feast days, and this becomes very ironic. Most dispensationalists admit that the first four typological feast days were fulfilled in Christ—but not “literally.” The first four feast days were: Passover, Unleavened Bread, Weeks, and Pentecost. Dispensationalists eagerly state that Christ is the fulfillment of Passover, and that the other three feast days were fulfilled “dramatically, and right on time,” to cite one dispensationalist.

Well, if the first four feast days were fulfilled dramatically, and right on time, it is patently clear that those feast days did not foreshadow the literalistic observance of another nationalistically oriented and restricted Passover in our future! Jesus was not a literal, physical “lamb.” The Old Testament lamb, however, foreshadowed Jesus’ death.





Likewise, the day of Pentecost, the feast of first-fruits, saw the first-fruit of the kingdom enter the body of Christ. They were the fulfillment of what the literalistic feast day anticipated. But they clearly were not literal wheat or barley! The literalistic, agricultural feast day foreshadowed the spiritual first-fruit of the harvest. Thus, James could write to the very brethren from the regions present on Pentecost, and say that they were “*a kind of first-fruits unto God*” (James 1:18).

Now, if the first four feast days were fulfilled in Christ and the church, and that fulfillment was not the literalistic observance of a literal feast day, then it is clearly wrong to demand that Zechariah was anticipating the observance of a literal Jewish feast day.

It is critical to honor the fact that the Old Testament feast days were in fact “*shadows of good things to come*” (Col 2:14-16; Heb 10:1-2). As shadows, or foretastes, they were neither the goal nor the substance. The external form of those feast days pointed forward to *better things*, and those better things are found in the spiritual body of Christ. It is a huge mistake to deny this clear biblical teaching. (A brief note here: Since the first four feast days were fulfilled dramatically and on time, *in Christ and the church*, this demonstrates in a powerful way that God's prophetic calendar was not postponed. If Christ's death as the Passover lamb was “right on time,” then that is “His death” of Daniel 9:26. This in fact falsifies the claim that His death postponed the prophetic calendar.)

Likewise, if Pentecost was the fulfillment of the typology of Israel's feast day, then it proves that the church was foreshadowed in those feast days, since what happened on Pentecost—in fulfillment of the typological feast day—was the

establishment of the church.

Our main point is that the spiritual fulfillment of the first four feast days points us inexorably to the spiritual fulfillment of the last three—including the Feast of Tabernacles of Zechariah 14. This alone falsifies the objection, but there is more.

What is the actual context of Zechariah 14? It is the time of the judgment of Israel/Jerusalem! Notice that in verse 1 the city would be taken at the coming of the Lord! Let me suggest that you read my previous articles on Zechariah for a fuller discussion of this. The taking of the city is critical, and the dispensational world gives only lip service to it.

What we find in Zechariah—which has been recognized by scholars of different backgrounds—is that there are two Jerusalems; one—the Old Covenant City, is destroyed, while the other—the True Jerusalem, is delivered from her enemies and enjoys life under Messiah.

Paul and the New Testament writers developed this concept. John draws extensively from Zechariah (cf. chapter 14) in Revelation where we find two cities, two Jerusalems! One is Babylon, the Old Jerusalem, doomed to destruction just as in Zechariah, while the other Jerusalem triumphs over the old and the citizens rejoice in the life in that city. See my extensive discussion of the two Jerusalems in my book *Who Is This Babylon?*

Not only does John develop what Zechariah foretold, he was emphatic that fulfillment was near, and we have powerful testimony to this in the 144,000. Notice the following: In Revelation 7 and 14, John saw the 144,000 who were of the twelve tribes of Israel. In chapter 14 they are depicted as standing on Mt. Zion (festal imagery) and

they are anticipating the imminent celebration of the Feast of Harvest at the coming of the Lord (14:6ff) in judgment of “Babylon.” What John says about these 144,000 precludes any application to our future:

The 144,000 endured the Great Tribulation (7:14f).

The 144,000 were the first generation of Jewish Christians—the first-fruit of those redeemed to God from man.

Therefore, the Great Tribulation—which of course leads directly to the coming of the Lord and celebration of Tabernacles—occurred in the first century.

In both Revelation and Zechariah, the Feast of Tabernacles is only observed after the destruction of the Old City, i.e. Babylon. Just as the overall typological nature of the feast days themselves points us in a spiritual direction, so do the specific details of the two cities and the celebration of the feast. We are dealing with the “heavenly Jerusalem” enjoying resurrection life (foreshadowed by the feast of Tabernacles).

So, in sum, the objection is based on a false premise that misunderstands the typological nature of the feast days. It misunderstands the spiritual nature of the fulfillment of the feast days, as clearly illustrated in the fulfillment of the first four feast days. The objection fails to honor the context of the fulfillment, the time of judgment on Jerusalem, and finally, the objection ignores what John had to say about the first-century fulfillment of Zechariah. Very clearly, the objection is overruled! ☩

The Kingdom

by Kurt Simmons

... continued from p. 7

Psalms 2 and 110 thus describe the reign of Christ; both extend His reign over the heathen and Christ's enemies; both set it at God's right hand in heaven in precisely the same terms as Daniel's coronation vision. The New Testament epistles and Acts affirm that both psalms were fulfilled in Christ's ascension (Acts 2:34-35; 13:33; Heb 1:13; 12:2; 1 Pet 3:22). Moreover, John portrays the heavenly coronation of Christ as an *accomplished fact*, drawing on the imagery and language of Daniel and the Psalms (Rev 5; 12:5), and Jesus Himself indicates present fulfillment of Psalm 2 (Rev 2:26-27). Hence, prophecies, such as Isaiah 9:6-7, which speak of Christ ruling upon David's throne, looked toward His resurrection and ascension as the means of their fulfillment, and not toward a physical kingdom located upon earth.

Learn War No More

Some will object that many (if not most) nations are in denial and rebellion of Christ's authority and Sonship: How does this square with imagery of a messianic kingdom in which the nations "beat their swords into plowshares" and learn war no more? Consider this prophecy of Isaiah:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (Isa 2:2-4)

Millennialists commonly rely upon this imagery in order to anticipate a time of universal peace on earth under the Messiah. However, this misunderstands the passage.

First, it must be pointed out that Scripture nowhere foretells a time when all nations willingly submit to Christ; just the opposite, in fact. When Psalm 110 states, "*Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies*," it presupposes resistance to Christ's reign. Likewise, when Psalm 2 proclaims the Son will break the nations with a rod of iron and thus urges earth's kings and judges to "*kiss the Son, lest he be angry and ye perish from the way*" (v. 12), it indicates that Christ governs all nations, whether they acknowledge Him or not (cf. Zech 14:16-19). Indeed, Isaiah himself says as much when he states that Christ will "*judge among the nations and shall rebuke many peoples*" (Isa 2:4). Thus, the notion of a time when the earth experiences universal peace is mere fantasy.

Second, when Isaiah says the nations will "*learn war no more*," he speaks only of those who walk in His paths, namely, those who obey the gospel. "Learning war" is the opposite of "rest from war." As the Jews obeyed God, He gave them rest from their enemies, but when they disobeyed, war resulted (Judg 3:8, 11, 30; 2 Sam 7:1, 11). "Learning war" therefore is to experience God's chastisement and correction; "rest from war" is to experience His reward and favor (cf. Judg 3:1-2). Hence, Isaiah's imagery of the nations "*beating their swords into plowshares*" applies only to those who "ascend" the mountain of the Lord (that is, receive the gospel), not the nations that remain in rebellion.

It is helpful to our understanding the kingdom to think in terms of the Roman Empire. Many nations came under Roman dominion, some willingly made alliance and were free; others were conquered and subjected to tribute. Some nations continued in subjection to Rome; others tried to break free and rebel. So it is with the kingdom of Christ: Some nations freely obey the gospel and own Christ as Lord, others are obstinate and rebel. Those that obey enjoy Christ's favor; those that do not experience His wrath.

The Coming of Christ in Wrath

Almost all prophecies that describe Christ's receipt of the kingdom

also describe His wrath. Just as dispensationalists mistake the nature of Christ's kingdom, they mistake the nature of His Second Coming, looking in both cases for a future bodily and visible manifestation. Preterists believe that the Second Coming was spiritual and providential; they believe that Jesus' coming in His kingdom in power described God's divine wrath upon the Jews and Romans for the murder of Christ and persecution of His church. Virtually all of the time texts of the New Testament place Jesus' return within the lifetimes of the first disciples.

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." (Matt 16: 27-28)

We encourage the reader to consult the following passages, which represent but a few of the many that might be cited demonstrating the first-century return of Christ: Matt 10:23; 23:36; 24:34; 26:64; John 21:22; Heb 10:37; James 5:8; Rev 1:1, 3; 22:7, 10, 12, 20. The reign of Christ manifested in the overthrow of Jerusalem and the Roman civil wars of AD 66-70 did not expend Christ's wrath; they were merely its beginning. The wars and calamities that beset men and nations down through history, even until today, represent the providential judgment of Christ as He rules the nations above the circle of the earth. Earth's peoples, kings and potentates should therefore heed the warning of the Psalmist, and bow before heaven's King:

"Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." (Ps 2:10-12)

Conclusion

The kingdom is the dominion of Christ over earth, which He obtained at His ascension. ☩

Our Theology is Wrong!

I've been wrong in my theology in the past. I am also wrong in my theology now. How do I know that? Because the Bible is the product of an infinite God, and I am a finite person. As Paul exclaimed:

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! (Rom 11:33)

This is not to say that we cannot search the Scripture and grow in knowledge and understanding of the Truth it contains. Rather, as finite beings we neither live long enough nor have the mental capacities to fully comprehend all of the truths contained in the Bible. The very fact that I am still studying and learning proves that my theology is incomplete; by God's grace, however, my theology will continue to develop and grow ever closer to the Truth. The corollary to recognizing the fact of my *incomplete* theology is that it must also be *wrong* in some areas as well.

Against that background I hope that you will understandably affirm my claim that *your* theology is also wrong—somewhere. Furthermore, the theology of every person who has ever written an article for *Fulfilled!* Magazine is also wrong—somewhere. The problem is that none of us knows what parts of our theology are wrong. If we knew where we were wrong we would simply correct those beliefs. After all, who willingly holds onto a view which they know is wrong? (Is it even possible to believe something that you know is false?)

How can we identify those areas of

errant theology and correct them? I like how my oldest brother frames the issue when discussing theology with others: he will often ask two questions, the first one being "If you were wrong in some area of your understanding of the Bible, would you want to know it?" Our first impulse might be to answer with an emphatic "Of course!" But admitting to being wrong can be uncomfortable. It's one thing to admit that we don't know everything, but quite another matter to have a specific item identified and proven to be wrong, because now we are responsible for that knowledge—now we must change. And change isn't always easy or comfortable.

Let's assume that we all want to know if and where we are wrong in our theology. My brother's second question is, "How are you going to find out?" That's the kicker! If you agree with my opening paragraphs, then you acknowledge that our individual theologies are at least partially wrong—but how do we find out where our theology is wrong? Here is where things can get dicey. Do we listen to more sermons from our pastor, read more books from our favorite author, or spend more time discussing the Bible with our trusted circle of fellow Christians? All of these are beneficial and have their places in our spiritual lives, but if these sources have helped to shape our current theology, isn't it also true that they've contributed to shaping our *wrong* theology? I tell people that if they agree completely with their pastor's or favorite author's theology that simply means that they are both wrong in the exact same areas of their theology. Think about it. If both my pastor and I have a finite, limited understanding of God's Word, then we are both wrong in certain areas of our theology. And if I agree 100% with my pastor's theology that simply means that we are both wrong in the same areas of our theology!

So how do we break free from this theological rut? May I suggest that we must interact with theologies that differ from our own? By "differing theologies" I don't mean theologies as in Hinduism or Islam, but differing theologies within

Christianity. Do you believe that the gifts of the Spirit are not for Christians today? Read a scholarly work by a respected theologian who disagrees. If you are correct, your theology should be able to counter his/her points. Even if you are correct, you will have gained a better understanding of the issue from both perspectives and will likely have identified and corrected some weak areas in your position.

This is iron sharpening iron. Unless the steel is brought into contact with the knife, no sharpening will take place. Likewise, unless we expose ourselves to differing theologies, our personal theology will not be sharpened. If we limit ourselves to our safe and comfortable theological sources we also limit the sharpening process. While we may all agree, we will all have the same wrong theology. We will become like matching butter knives: unified in appearance, but unable to cut. Unable to rightly divide the Word of Truth.

The same holds true for preterism. There are a host of different views: literal rapture vs. spiritual rapture; corporate body resurrection vs. individual body resurrection; single millennium vs. two millenniums. Obviously, all of these views cannot be correct; therefore, someone has to be wrong! But who, and on which points? If you simply pick your favorite preterist and stick with his theology, you will simply both be wrong in the same areas. Interaction with different views, however, allows the sharpening process to take place, both in the preterist community as a whole and in our own personal theologies. One of the purposes of *Fulfilled!* Magazine is to present different views within preterism in order to promote the sharpening process. An axiom I have used is "we don't tell you what to think, we give you something to think about."

The bottom line is that every author ever printed in *Fulfilled!* is wrong somewhere, so read it at your own risk. On the other hand, unless we take the risk of exposing ourselves to differing theologies, we are destined to become butter knives: conformed to a standard but dull. ☩



Edmund Lee and Michael Loomis

All Prophecy Pointed To The First-Century Generation

by Brian L. Martin

(Much of the material contained in this series of articles can be found in “Behind the Veil of Moses,” available at online retailers)

Although in this article we will conclude our discussion of the New Testament time statements regarding biblical end-time events, I wish to stress that we have in no way exhausted the subject. However, I do hope that you have been impressed by both the breadth and the depth of the various time statements and indicators in the New Testament regarding Christ’s Second Coming. We will conclude the timing subject with the following excerpt from my book *Behind the Veil of Moses*, which demonstrates that the inspired authors of the New Testament saw their generation as the focal point for the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

Added to all the evidence that “this generation” was the generation of the New Testament is the fact that the New Testament authors, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, were able to see beyond the veil of Moses and understand that *all* of the Old Testament prophets foresaw the New Testament generation:

*Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold **these days**.* (Acts 3:24)

*For **everything that was written in the past** was*

*written to teach **us**, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.* (Rom 15:4 NIV)

*And all these [heroes of the faith], having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, **that they should not be made perfect apart from us** [“us” being the author and readers of Hebrews, not you and me]. (Heb 11:39-40)*

*Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ **and the glories that would follow**. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, **but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you** through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into. (1 Peter 1:10-12; emphases added)*

Do not the above passages indicate that the New Testament generation was the focal point of Old Testament prophecy, and that all things were summed up within *that* generation? Jesus also taught that the Old



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Testament prophets pointed toward His generation:

*For **all the prophets** and the law prophesied until John. (Matt 11:13)*

*. . . for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see **what you see**, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. (Matt 13:17)*

*But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near **For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.** (Luke 21:20, 22)*
(emphases added)

The last passage is from Luke's account of the Olivet discourse. In Matthew's and Mark's accounts of that discourse (Matt 24:15; Mark 13:14), Jesus refers to Daniel's prophecy of the abomination of desolation. Could Jesus have also had Daniel in mind when He spoke the words recorded in Luke's version of the discourse?

Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank. And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?" Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished. (Dan 12:5-7; emphasis added)

In both instances, *all things* are finished (fulfilled) when Jerusalem is surrounded by armies and destroyed, shattering the power of the holy people. Like Daniel, the disciples also asked for clarification on when the prophetic revelation of the temple's destruction would occur. The difference between the two is that, while Daniel was told that the words were sealed up till the end time, Jesus told His disciples that *they* would see Jerusalem surrounded by armies; that *their* generation would see all these things fulfilled:

Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, "My lord, what shall be the end of these things?" And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." (Dan 12:8-9)

But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies (Luke 21:20)

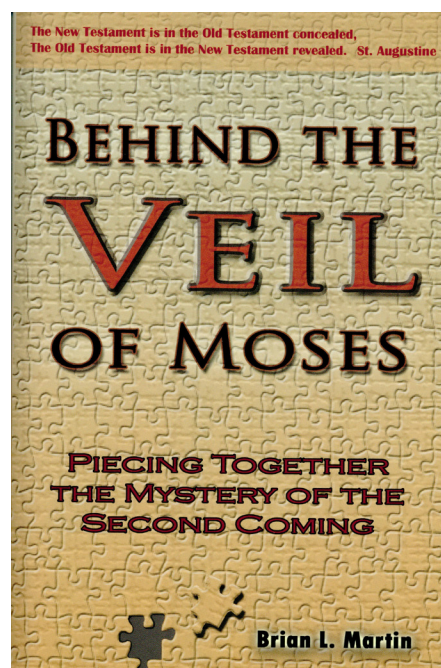
Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. (Matt 24:34)

If we believe, as we so often hear, that we are in the "last days," one has to wonder—the "last days" of what? The last days of the Old Covenant? If so, then the "last days" have endured for nearly two thousand years—longer than the covenant itself! And how can we say that the Old Covenant has not completely passed away? What is left of it that is yet to pass away? Or are we in the last days of the world as we know it, waiting for the elements to be burned with fire and replaced with a new heavens and a new earth? Although these phrases are found in the Bible, are we required to understand them in a literal, physical sense? We think

not, as we shall demonstrate in the coming chapters.

As untraditional and foreign as it sounds, the interpretation which best fits is that the last days spoken of in the Bible were the last days of the Old Covenant, which "passed away" in AD 70. Peter announced in ca. AD 30 (Acts 2) that they were in the last days. Thus the "last days" generation encompassed the forty years from AD 30-70. *That* was the generation which asked Jesus about the end times. *That* was the generation of which He spoke. *That* was the generation upon which "all these things" came to pass.

Every conceivable way of looking at the timing of biblical end-times prophecies leads to one, and only one, destination—the first-century generation. So how are we able to take what was promised to them and apply it to our future? We will explore that in coming articles.



The Greek Column

“This” and “That”

by Parker Voll

“Truly I say to you, **this** generation will not pass away until all **these things** take place.” (Matt 24:34 NASB95)

“But of **that** day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.” (Matt 24:36 NASB95)

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in **these** last days has spoken to us in His Son . . . (Heb 1:1-2 NASB95)

In this installment, we will be examining words known as *demonstrative pronouns*. Grammatically, these words are typically used as either *substantives* (e.g., “these things” in Matt 24:34), or *adjectives* (e.g., Matt 24:36, Heb 1:2). Demonstrative pronouns work by indicating or singling out the referred subject. Another definition for a demonstrative is: “Denoting or belonging to a class of determiners used to point out the individual referent or referents intended, such as *this*, *that*, *these*, and *those*.”¹ In surveying how demonstratives are used in the New Testament, it is clear that the authors used demonstratives in ways very similar to how we use them in modern English, so I will simply be pointing out some details about these words and how they might be significant in forming a theologically sound eschatology.

Note the previous sentence, in which I used the phrase “these words.” You may or may not have noticed this, but in either case it probably wasn’t difficult to determine what I was referring to by the adjective “these.” This is precisely the point: demonstratives only make sense when their immediate context is considered. For example, in the context of this paragraph it should be patently obvious that I am talking about *demonstrative* words. The key to ascertaining

the referent for any demonstrative is to look at the context of the discourse. Indeed, we use demonstratives quite often in normal speech and writing; by and large, their meaning is unambiguous, although we must at times ask the question, “To what does a particular demonstrative refer?”

Demonstratives are used extensively throughout the New Testament. By count of my *BibleWorks* software program, the so-called “near” demonstrative, e.g., *this* or *these* (*houtos* and its variants), is used 1387 times (and is the twelfth most-used word in the New Testament). The “far” demonstrative, e.g., *that* or *those* (*ekeinos* and

its variants) is not as frequently used (only 243 times), but it is still an essential vocabulary word.² The distinction between “near” and “far” demonstratives is also important. However, it must be remembered that the “nearness” or “farness” is to be understood as being *relative* or *comparative*, and is discerned within the discourse in which the words are used. Indeed, BDAG defines *houtos* in its substantive usage as “the person or thing comparatively near at hand in the discourse material, *this*, *this one* (contrast *ekeinos* referring to something comparatively farther away),” while its adjectival usage is defined as “pertinent to an entity perceived as present or near.”³ Contrast the main definition of *ekeinos* with *houtos*: “pertinent to an entity



“This” and “That”

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mentioned or understood and viewed as relatively remote in the discourse setting, *that person, that thing, that.*⁴ *Ekeinos* also carries some other subtle, idiomatic meanings.

I cited the three passages at the beginning of this article precisely because of the importance that the demonstrative pronouns play in understanding those passages. In Matthew 24:34, we have two instances of the “near” demonstrative. The phrase *this generation* is a substantive that is used a total of six times in Matthew alone. While in the other five usages it is obvious that Jesus is referring to His contemporaries, a common interpretation among some exegetes is that in Matthew 24:34, *this generation* all of a sudden refers to something completely different: a “race” of Jews that will be judged in a time far distant.⁵ I will politely say such an interpretive move is a stretch that can be dismissed for not even reaching the degree of *prima facie* evidence. In fact, it is precisely because of Matthew’s consistent uses of *this generation* throughout his gospel that we can be confident that Jesus is referencing His contemporary generation in 24:34 as well.

The other use of a demonstrative in Matthew 24:34 is the phrase *these things*, which constitutes a single word in Greek (*tauta*). Remembering the rule that demonstratives are guided by context, we can be confident that Matthew is simply referencing the events of the immediate discourse that began in v. 4. Most importantly, these events include the *parousia*, the technical term for Jesus’ Second Coming, as revealed in v. 27.

The phrase *that day and hour* in Matthew 24:36 contains the “far” demonstrative. In seeking to find out to what this demonstrative refers, I suggest it may be doing double duty. One of the definitions of *ekeinos* is that it may “differentiate persons or things already named, from others.” In which case we are (again, in the context of the discourse), led back to the original question the disciples posed, which was, “When will these things be?” (Matt 24:2). The other possibility is that Jesus is referencing a future day that is removed from their present time (albeit bounded by the length of their generation), which is the same thing He does in v. 22 (*Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.*).⁶ In fact, we might consider vv. 34–35 as a sort of pivot point of the discourse, the *that day and hour* of v. 36 works with the *those days* of v. 22 to bind the two halves of the discourse together. Some exegetes have suggested that the *that day and hour* of v. 36 is referencing a completely different time frame than the first part of the discourse (a time future to us, of course). But, as DeMar suggests, “Jesus does not change subjects when He assures the disciples that ‘heaven and earth will pass away.’”⁷

Finally, we see an important use of the “near” demonstrative in Hebrews 1:2, where the author uses the substantive phrase *these last days*. Again, in context the author is simply setting up a contrast with the days of *long ago* in v. 1. In other words, *these last days* refer to the time when the letter was written, and the people who needed to hear what God was saying were his contemporaries (as the “us” in v. 2 indicates). The rest of the letter, then, is filled with hortatory encouragements and warnings that are directed at a particular audience living in the first century, to whom such warnings were immediately relevant precisely because *they* were living in the “last days.” Attempts to get around this simple fact by suggesting that, perhaps, *these last days* references a long, drawn out “age” that began in the first century and continues to this day,⁸ is doing disservice to the simple meaning of the text while attempting to serve a theological system that is not supported by the New Testament text. ✚

¹ These definitions are culled from the web site dictionary.com, s.v., *demonstrative*, accessed 11/5/11.

² Mounce’s popular *Basics of Biblical Greek* grammar assigns words used 50 times or more in the New Testament for study (plus a few more). By learning to recognize these 319 words (only about 5.7% of the total number of different words), one can recognize about 80% of New Testament words.

³ Danker, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. “*houtos, haute, touto*,” pp. 740–741. This work is commonly referred to as BDAG.

⁴ BDAG, s.v., “*ekeinos, e, o*,” pp. 301–302.

⁵ This is a common move among dispensational interpreters. E.g., see Pentecost, Dwight J., *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958), p. 281.

⁶ See BDAG, 302 for an explanation of these uses of *ekeinos*.

⁷ See his discussion of the Olivet discourse in DeMar, Gary, *Last Days Madness: Obsession of the Modern Church* (Smyrna, Georgia: American Vision, 1997), pp. 179–92.

⁸ E.g., see Pentecost, *Things to Come*, p. 154, where he posits that Hebrews’ author is here referencing the last days “for the church.” However, I can attest to hearing many modern Evangelical interpreters forwarding this meaning of these last days.

In This Issue:

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Zechariah 14

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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!