

FALL 2014

VOLUME 9 ISSUE 3

# *FULFILLED!* *Magazine*

PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS OF FULFILLED PROPHECY AND LIFE IN CHRIST



## Satan - Is He an Angelic Being?





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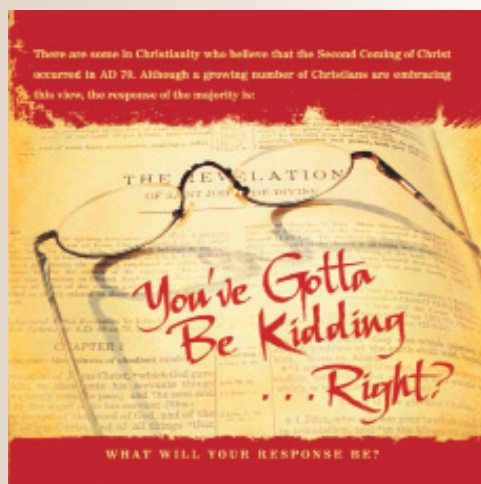
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## Editor's Note...

The art work in this issue was created by Gustave Dore. Some of the original black and white prints have been colored by various individuals.

SINCE MY EARLY DAYS in preterism I have seen a parallel between many preterists and first-year college students. We've all heard the stories of college students who, out on their own for the first time in their lives, and no longer under the household rules and watchful eyes of parents, have "gone wild" so-to-speak. They cast aside the boundaries and guidelines their parents diligently attempted to instill in them, so that they might live their own lives. Sadly, these scenarios sometimes end in disaster. Often times, however, after a season of frivolousness and lack of productivity, it begins to dawn on many students that, rather than merely "cramping their style," the "boring" and "restrictive" boundaries and disciplines of their parents were actually rooted in something deeper; namely, the goal of having their children mature into self-sufficient and productive members of society.

Likewise, it seems that many Christians, having "broken faith" in a manner of speaking with the Church's traditional eschatology by embracing full-preterism, now, like the first-year college students, see themselves out on their own theologically and tend to throw off all traditional Church boundaries/doctrines. As Ed Stevens states in his "Perspectives" article, "Since futurist Christianity is wrong on eschatology, it is tempting to assume that it is wrong on everything else, and throw it all out (the good with the bad) to start over from scratch." I agree with Ed that this is not a wise thing to do. However, it is difficult, on the other hand, after realizing the traditional Church's blatant error in eschatology, to blithely go on as if that was the only error, and, now that the error has been discovered, all is well in Christendom. As Kurt Simmons notes, "... because Preterism recognizes the figurative nature of prophetic language, the literalness of other genre of Scripture is sometimes called into question."

Obviously, as the plethora of denominations demonstrates, there are numerous errors in Christianity. It may be objected, and rightfully so, that

most of the denominational divisions are over theological details, rather than major doctrines.

So what gives full-preterism/preterists the liberty to question the Church's traditional position of a future Second Coming of Christ, and yet call for respect of the Church's other traditional positions? As Kenneth Gentry Jr. states in *When Shall These Things Be?*, "Berkhof has well noted that to urge 'No creed but the Bible' is a 'virtual denial of the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the past history of the Church.'" How can full-preterism claim the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the history of the Church in all other areas of doctrine, while exempting eschatology?

Obviously, I cannot speak for all full-preterists, but I take solace in the fact that while all of the major doctrines of the Church (e.g., The Canon, The Trinity, The divinity and humanity of Christ, etc.) have been debated and defined by Church councils throughout history, eschatology is the one area for which the Church never officially convened a council. While many full-preterists have been quick to point this out and suggest that the time has come for such a council, I find far more impactful the fact that well known futurist theologians have voiced similar opinions. Ironically, Berkhof, whom Gentry quoted to imply full-preterism's "denial of the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the past history of the Church" in the area of eschatology, is one of those voices:

"The doctrine of the last things never stood in the centre of attention, is one of the least developed doctrines, and therefore calls for no elaborate discussion. Its main elements have rather been constant, and these constitute practically the whole dogma of the Church respecting future things. Occasionally deviating views occupied a rather important place in theological discussions, but these were never incorporated into the confessions of the Church. It may be that, as Dr. Orr surmises, we have now reached that point in the history



# Mailbag...

of dogma in which the doctrine of the last things will receive greater attention and be brought to further development.” *History of Christian Doctrines*, p. 259

If no less a theologian than Louis Berkhof could respect the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the past history of the Church while at the same time state that perhaps that very same Church has reached the point in which the doctrine of last things will receive greater attention and be brought to further development, I think that full-preterists are not out of line in doing the same, but rather in good company.

Moving on to the content of this issue, a reader asked how preterism affected one's view of Satan, if at all. You will find two diametrically opposed views in the following pages. As always, we're not telling you what to think, but rather giving you something to think about.

This update has been more of an editorial than an update, but regardless it wouldn't be complete without expressing our gratitude for your continued prayerful and financial support, as well as your encouraging words.

Blessings,

*Brian*



Thanks so much for the latest issue of *Fulfilled*. This had articles of great and reinforcing beliefs in preterism. Hope all is well to continue on schedule for further issues.

*David, OR*

We (13 people) have been meeting in our homes for the last 6-7 years. Your magazine has been a source of conversation and inspiration since it's conception and we thank God and you for it's creation.

*Roger, Tx*

Thanks again for a wonderful magazine. Great summary by Ed Stevens in response to Brock Hollett.

*Carole, CA*

What a difference a magazine makes! I've been reading *Fulfilled* magazine for a few years now. I've had to learn how to think all over again (like a course in de-programming). Big changes occur. Faith and hope become real (I mean really real—not some far off pie-in-the-sky-whenever. It's like going from “rags to riches”! And oh, what riches! Thank you all for the hard

work that goes into producing this jewel. God bless you all,

*Laurette, VT*

I was thankful for bringing into focus by this magazine [Summer 2014] things that in the last publication [Spring 2014] seemed troubling to me. Also, Brian, that chart is very revealing—the timing that was inspired by God through those writers is significant. I liked the chart and plan to reduce it and make it a part of my Bible pages.

*Keith, MT*

Dear Friends,

Thank you for the Spring 2014 issue of *Fulfilled*. It really helped to see these differing views laid side-by-side. I don't think I ever would have noticed the internal evidence in Hebrews for a pre-AD70 date like Mr. Andreason did—wonderful! Also, I now have a better understanding of the IBV and the CBV as compared by Ed Stevens: and Don Preston brought so much more to light.

*Jeanine, KY*

It's like going from  
“rags to riches.” And  
oh, what riches!

### Preterism and Satan

by Kurt Simmons

**T**HIS ARTICLE ANSWERS THE question “*What is your view of Satan, and does Preterism affect it?*” It should be stated at the outset that there is no direct correlation between one’s eschatology and one’s view of Satan. However, because Preterism recognizes the figurative nature of prophetic language, the literalness of other genre of Scripture is sometimes called into question. Because Satan figures prominently in eschatology and the book of Revelation, Satan’s identity should not necessarily be taken at face value, but rather tested to determine the author’s intended meaning. While reasonable minds can differ, the preferred view is that traditional notions about Satan cannot withstand scrutiny.

#### No Direct Teaching in Scripture

There is no explicit or direct statement, teaching, or explanation in Scripture regarding the identity and origin of “Satan,” demons, or unclean spirits. What we believe about these therefore involves a certain amount of speculation and deduction, and is heavily dependent upon the conditioning and influences of our culture, including those encountered in our respective worship communities.

There are two basic views about devils, demons, and unclean spirits. One view has it that they are supernatural beings, either the spirits of the wicked dead or fallen angels; that Satan’s proper name is Lucifer; that he was chief among the angels, but sought to be equal with God and thus led a revolt in heaven, only to be defeated by Michael and his angels and subsequently cast down to earth, where his inveterate hatred for God drives him to wreak havoc, tempt man, persecute Christians, and prosecute God’s people before His throne in his role as Adversary. Further, Adam’s sin somehow gave Satan dominion in earth and over death and Hades, where he reigns, tormenting the souls of the damned.

#### Stuff of Superstition

Although held by many intelligent people, I consider this popular and traditional view to have no basis in fact. I have been a Christian thirty years, and have never seen or even heard of someone possessed by a demon or unclean spirit. I believe this is the common experience of almost all Western Christians, and that

there are no credible accounts of demonic possession within our experience. In fact, the only reason any Christian would affirm the existence of devils at all is because of Scripture, and this because of profound misunderstanding and lack of critical thinking. The same sort of wooden, non-critical reading that futurists bring to eschatology fuels belief in Satan and demons. I believe a deeper, more thoughtful reading of Scripture will dispel these notions entirely.

#### More Critical Thinking

The preferred view is that angels, being spiritual beings, do not have free will and cannot be tempted with evil or the lusts of the flesh, and therefore cannot fall or revolt. The terms *devil* and *Satan* are used various ways in Scripture, and the New Testament authors used these terms in referring to a particular source of *evil* or *temptation* (Matt 16:23, *Simon Peter*; John 6:70, *Judas Iscariot*), women guilty of *malicious gossip* (1 Tim 3:11; Titus 2:3, where *diabolos* is translated *false accuser/slanderer*), an *enemy nation* or *persecuting power* (Zech 3:1; Rom 16:20), a personification of an inanimate object such as an *idol* (1 Cor 10:20; cf. Exod 34:15; Lev 17:7; Deut 32:17; 2 Chron 11:15), or something abstract, like *sin* (Heb 2:14; cf. Gen 4:7). In fact, the Hebrew word *satan* is not a proper name at all, but rather a generic term that signifies an *adversary* or *opponent*. It first occurs in Numbers 22:22, where it is used of the angel of the LORD when he stood as an “adversary” to Balaam. The same term is used of the Philistines *vis-à-vis* David (1 Sam 29:4), and the adversaries of Solomon are likewise so called several times (1 Kings 5:4; 11:14, *Hadad the Edomite*; 1 Kings 5:4:23, 25, *Rezon, the son of Eliadah*). When we read in 1 Chronicles 21:1 that “*Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel*,” the adversary almost







certainly was not a demonic being, but an enemy nation, probably the Philistines (cf. 2 Sam 24:1). In Revelation, the dragon, which is the devil and Satan (Rev 20:2), is Rome-Leviathan, the world civil power oppressing God's people and opposing the gospel, and not a demonic being at all.

## Some Examples from Scripture Examined

In Zechariah, the prophet records a vision thought traditionally to confirm the existence of a supernatural agent called Satan: The prophet saw Joshua the high priest in filthy garments and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him (Zech 3:1, 2). However, scholarly translations typically identify "an/the Adversary" as an alternate reading for "Satan." More importantly, most scholars recognize that the passage is symbolic: Joshua represents the children of Israel returned out of captivity. When we consult the historical situation behind the vision, we find that the Jews were attempting to rebuild the temple, but were hindered and opposed by the region's governing authorities, who persuaded the king of Persia to stop the work (cf. Dan 10:13; Ezra 4; Neh 4). However, it was the ministry of the prophets Zechariah and Haggai which encouraged the people to continue the work of rebuilding the temple (Ezra 5:1; Zech 4:9). Hence, it is almost certain this is the meaning of the vision, and that the Persian monarchy, nobility, and other governing authorities opposing the work were, collectively, the adversary represented by "Satan."

In Revelation, John depicts a battle in heaven in which a dragon and his angels fight with Michael and his angels (Rev 12:7-11). The dragon is often interpreted to be Satan, but here again the passage is symbolic and should not be interpreted literally. The preferred view is that the battle represents Christ's earthly ministry and that of His disciples. Michael (Heb *Who is like the LORD?*) is Christ; His angels are

the disciples and messengers of the gospel. The dragon harkens back to the serpent in the garden and is a personification of sin and death; the dragon's angels are those who oppose the gospel. Following our first ancestors' fall, God said that He would put enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent; the serpent's seed would bruise his heel, but he would crush the serpent's head (Gen 3:15). The seed of the woman was Christ; the seed of the serpent were the children of disobedience (the Romans and Jews; cf. John 8:44). The serpent bruised the heel of the promised Seed in the crucifixion; but Christ crushed its head. The sting (venom) of death (the serpent) is sin; the strength of sin was the law (1 Cor 15:56). By his substitutionary death and atoning blood, the law was fulfilled and taken out of the way, "*spoiling principalities and powers*" (Col 2:13-17). By His resurrection, Jesus delivered the crushing blow to the serpent (2 Tim 1:10). Death, which had ruled from Adam to Moses as the prince of this world (Rom 5:14, 17; John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11), was cast out, and its principality destroyed. Thus, John says Michael and his angels overcame the dragon and his angels "*by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death*" (Rev 12:11). This shows that the battle concluded with the cross and preaching of the gospel, and was not a literal battle waged in heaven at all.

## Lucifer is the King of Babylon

Regarding the term "Lucifer," this word is derived from the Latin Bible and is a compound made up of *lux* (light) and *ferre* (to bear). It occurs in Isaiah 14:12 in reference to the king of Babylon (Isa 14:4), where scholars commonly translate the Hebrew *heylel* as "Venus" or "the morning star." The same term also occurs in the Latin Bible in 2 Peter 1:19: "*We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star (Lat lucifer) arise in your hearts.*" Here we see that the term is not a proper name at all and has no reference whatever to a demonic being or fallen angel. Another example commonly cited as evidence that Satan is a fallen angel is from the book of Ezekiel. But, like Isaiah, the prophet is merely describing an earthly king, the king of Tyre, grown swollen with pride and self-conceit, who therefore sets himself up in his heart as God (Ezek 28:1-19). Such demonstrations of pride are relatively common in Scripture (Isa 37:21-27; Acts 12:20-23) and was the

...continued on page 8





# Satan

by Kurt Simmons

especial sin of the Caesars. This sort of pride stems from a carnal mind; angels, being spirit beings, are incapable of falling into this sort of sin or temptation.

## Mental illness and Physical disease – Bishop Lightfoot

Unclean spirits and demonic possession seem to be no more than physical and mental illness, the Jews having learned to refer to them this way beginning with the Babylonian captivity and the Greek conquest of Palestine. No cases of demonic possession occur in the Old Testament, and those recorded in the gospels occur almost exclusively in Galilee, the Decapolis, and other areas heavily populated by Gentiles. When Jesus heals men afflicted by physical maladies in those regions, it is often described as casting out an unclean spirit, but the same afflictions and miracles of healing in Judea make no reference to devils whatever. Hence, the whole thing seems to be nothing more than the regional superstition and terminology of those living in areas populated by Gentiles. This is similar to today's situation where there are virtually no occurrences of demonic possession in Western civilization, but in Africa and other superstitious and uneducated areas of the globe, belief in evil spirits is widespread and locals attribute bodily ailments to this source commonly. Bishop Lightfoot confirms this with the following account of demonic possession:

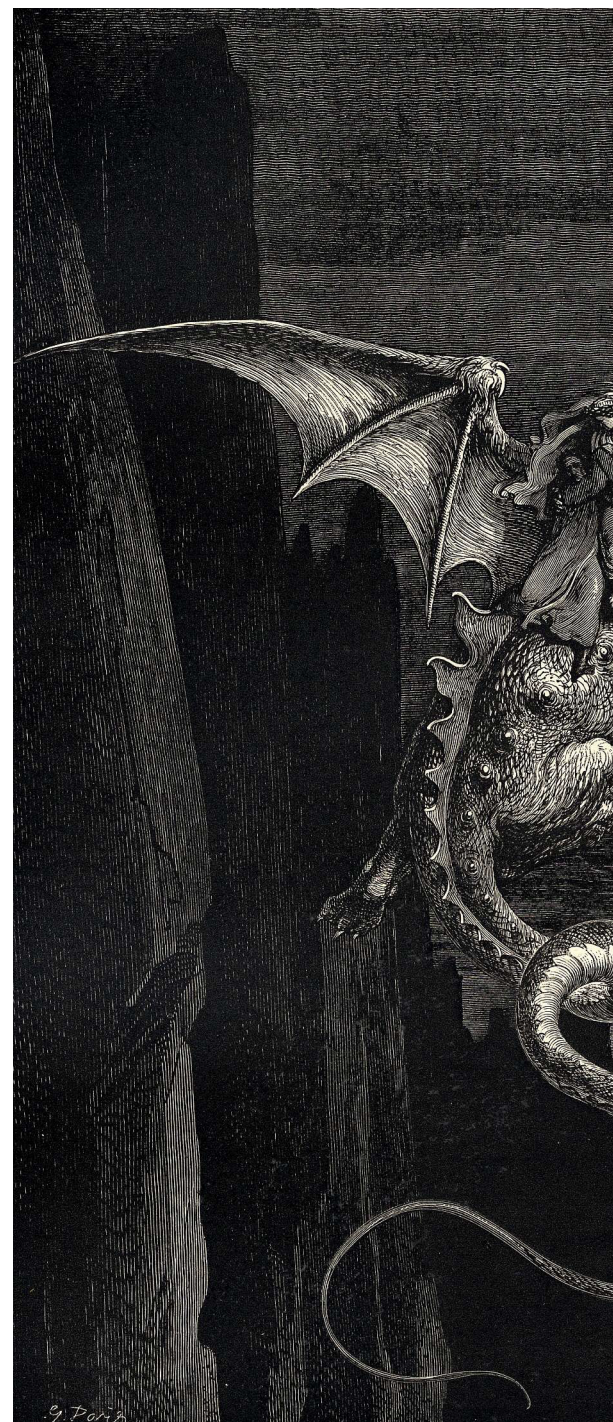
There were divers diseases, which, in their own nature, were but natural diseases, which yet the Jews did, commonly, repute as seizure and possessing by the devil; especially those that distempered the mind, or did in more special manner convulse the body: and, according to this common language and conception of the nation, the language of the gospel doth speak exceeding frequently. Examples of this kind of dialect among the Jews, we might produce divers, as that in Maimonides: "A man, which is troubled with an evil spirit, and saith, when the sickness [חולי] begins upon him, Write a bill of divorcement to my wife, he said as good as nothing, because he is not 'compos sui': and so likewise a drunken man, when he comes near the drunkenness of Lot," etc. he calls the evil spirit [חולי], or 'a sickness;' and by it he means lunacy, or distractedness, that had its '*lucida intervalla*.' So the Jews speak of a man 'that is possessed by Cordicus:' which they interpret to be, 'a spirit that seizeth on him, that drinketh too much wine out of the wine-press.'

And, to spare more; because the story in hand is of a child, take but this example of an evil spirit, which, when conceived, did seize upon children: 'Shibta (say they) is an evil spirit, that seizeth upon children by the neck, even upon the sinews behind the neck, and drieth them up from their use and strength, till it kill him. And the time of it is from the child's being two months old, and the danger of it is till the child be seven years old.'

Which seemeth to mean nothing else but convulsion-fits, or shrinking of the sinews, or some suchlike thing; a natural malady."<sup>1</sup>

## Lunacy, Madness, and Epilepsy

The word "lunatic" means "moonstruck," and describes someone who is insane or suffers convulsions or epilepsy. However, lacking knowledge of medical science, many Jews and other superstitious peoples fell into the error of supposing men were possessed with devils. Thus, in Matthew 17:14-21, a father brought his child to Jesus saying he was "lunatic" (v.15), but in healing the child Matthew describes Jesus as having "rebuked the devil" (v.18). In Mark's parallel account, the father said his son had a "*dumb spirit, and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away*"







(Mark 9:17, 18). But who cannot see that the child suffered epilepsy or some form of recurring seizure, and was not possessed by a devil at all? Indeed, Thayer defines “lunatic” (*selhniazomai*) as epilepsy: “to be moon-struck (cf. lunatic); to be epileptic (*epilepsy being supposed to return and increase with the increase of the moon*): Mt. iv.24; xvii:15.”<sup>2</sup>

### Opinions of Isaac Newton and Thomas Hobbs

Let us hear the voices of other learned men: Isaac Newton (AD 1642 – 1727) was a physicist and mathematician and is widely regarded as one of the most influential scientists of all time. Newton also wrote copiously on biblical topics, including eschatology. Newton states:

- “A Dragon or serpent, if called the old serpent or the Devil signifies the spirit of error delusion & inordinate affections reigning in the world. For spirits good or evil are sometimes put for the tempers dispositions & persuasions of men’s minds much after the manner that we often take death for a substance.”<sup>3</sup>
- “From this figure of putting serpents for spirits & spirits or Daemons for distempers of the mind, came the vulgar opinion of the Jews & other eastern nations that mad men & lunaticks were possessed with evil spirits or Daemons. Whence Christ seems to have used this language not only as Prophet but also in compliance with the Jews way of speaking: so when he is said to cast out Devils, those Devils may be nothing but diseases unless it can be proved by the circumstances that they are substantial spirits.”<sup>4</sup>

Thomas Hobbes (AD 1588 – 1679) lived under Oliver Cromwell’s government and the Puritan Commonwealth (1641 – 1660). He is mostly remembered today for his political treatise *Leviathan*: “That there were many Daemoniaques in the Primitive Church, and few Mad-men, and other such singular diseases; whereas in these times we hear of, and see many Mad-men, and few Daemoniaques, proceeds not from the change of Nature; but of Names” (ch. 45, p. 445).

Examples of this sort could be multiplied. In a word, just as pagan notions and superstitions crept into the church (e.g., purgatory, worship of statues, veneration of relics, prayers to saints, etc.), so the superstitious usages of the Gentiles found its way into the language and thinking of the Jews dwelling in Galilee, and thence into the Bible. This is not an endorsement of the idea of demons, just the reality of communication, common thinking, and the science *du jour*. But in the Old Testament, no such thing as demonic possession existed; it is entirely a New Testament phenomenon due to Gentile occupation of Palestine following the Assyrio-Babylonian captivity.

### Conclusion

Although the doctrine of Satan is not directly related to eschatology or Preterism, it is a topic Preterists tend to visit and test, and, like futurism, traditional doctrines are often found wanting. ✚

<sup>1</sup> John Lightfoot, *Harmony of the Gospels*, Complete Works (1684) Vol. 3, pp. 102, 103.

<sup>2</sup> J. H. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon* (Fourth Edition), p. 573.

<sup>3</sup> Newton, *Yahuda MS 9.1*, ff. 19v-20v.

<sup>4</sup> Newton, *Yahuda MS 9.1*, f. 21v.

### Satan is a Real Angelic Being!

by Ed Stevens

THE PRETERIST MOVEMENT, LIKE much of mainstream Christianity, is constantly being challenged by false doctrines such as the following which teach a different gospel and undermine our faith in the Deity of Christ and the Trinity:

- *Universalism* – believes everyone will eventually be saved
- *Unitarianism* – denies the Deity of Christ and the Trinity
- *Christadelphianism* – denies the Deity of Christ, the Trinity, eternal conscious punishment of the unsaved, and that Satan is a real angelic being

Preterists make themselves vulnerable to these heretical influences when they abandon the traditional doctrines of historic Christianity. Since futurist Christianity is wrong on eschatology, it is tempting to assume that it is wrong on everything else, and throw it all out (the good with the bad) to start over from scratch. However, that is not a wise thing to do. It opens the door to confusion and deception by all the false teachers, who find plenty of unwary souls on whom to unload their anti-biblical doctrines. These heresies thrive in the online social media especially. We all need to be more careful about what we listen to, and equip ourselves with a solid understanding of the *essential doctrines of the Christian faith*, so that we will not be deceived by every wind of false doctrine that blows through (cf. Eph 4:14; Heb 13:9).

One of the many false doctrines that have invaded Preterism is the idea that Satan (or the Devil) is not a real angelic being, but instead is merely referring to a personification of sinfulness in the human heart, or some wicked human being(s). The Christadelphians are one of the heretical sects that promote this idea. They use this very doctrine to deny the pre-existence of the Son of God, the Deity of Christ, and the doctrine of the Trinity. Besides being *Unitarian*, they are also *Annihilationist* (i.e., the idea that the souls of the unsaved cease to exist after physical death). It is therefore no surprise to see that many of those who deny the real angelic nature of Satan are also Unitarian or Annihilationist, just as the Christadelphians are.

There is a relationship between our views on Satan, the Deity of Christ, and the afterlife of the unredeemed. Therefore, we need to avoid falling under the influence of heretical sects like Universalism, Unitarianism and Christadelphianism. This article will focus on some of the biblical evidence which

demonstrates that *Satan is a real angelic being*.

#### Satan Is Not Our Sin Nature or a Human

A growing number of Preterists have fallen prey to the Christadelphian idea that Satan or the Devil is a not a real angelic being. There are two different approaches to this within Christadelphianism: (1) Satan is merely our own *internal* sinful human nature or inclination to sin, or (2) Satan is an *external* person, i.e., another sinful human being or group of humans (not an angelic being), who is doing the tempting. The younger Christadelphians lean toward the first idea, while the older generation prefers the second one. However, both approaches deny that Satan is a real angelic being.

The error of this non-angelic concept of Satan should be obvious to all of us, but sadly some Preterists have been deceived by it. An online critic of the Christadelphians suggested that their departure from the biblical teaching about Satan appears to come from a mindset which rejects *all* the dogmas of the historic church (regardless of whether or not they are biblical), and has “the natural tendency to jump from one extreme to another.” In other words, just because the Roman Catholic misrepresentation of Satan (with horns, a tail, and a pitchfork) is unbiblical, they have gone to the equally wrong and opposite extreme of denying that the Devil is a real angelic being.

The three most common fallacies of the Christadelphians in their arguments for a non-angelic concept of Satan are the following:

- *Redefine* the meaning of the Greek/Hebrew words for *Satan* and *Devil*, so that they are merely descriptions of human character, rather than proper names of an angelic being. They reject all other possible definitions of the words, and apply their own selective definition to all occurrences of the word, regardless of its contextual usage and the other definitions that are found in the standard Greek lexicons.
- *Ignore* the distinction in meaning between “a satan” and “the Satan.” They refuse to acknowledge that the use of the definite article with these words makes a significant difference in determining which “satan” or “devil” is under consideration in each context. For instance, 29 of the 36 occurrences of “satan” and 29 of the 37 occur-

IT IS MOST UNWISDOMLY TO THINK THAT SATAN VITTED HIMSELF DOWN BEFORE AND WORSHIP H



# Does preterism affect your view of Satan?

Edward E. Stevens

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- rences of “devil” in the New Testament have the definite article attached to them. Thus, nearly 80 percent of the occurrences of these two words in the New Testament have the definite article, yet the Christadelphians ignore this as being irrelevant.
- *Force* their own predetermined meaning into the context of each occurrence of the word (Satan or Devil), rather than letting the context provide its own interpretation. That is *eisegesis*, not *exegesis*.

## What Does Scripture Say About Satan?

There are many contexts in both the Old and New Testaments which clearly indicate that a personal angelic being called “the Satan” or “the Devil” is under consideration (e.g., Gen 3; Job; Zech 3; Rev 12 and 20). Since we do not have the space to deal with all of them, we will focus on the one which is the clearest (Matt 4:1-11). Since space prohibits printing the entire passage, please follow along in your Bible.

ST UNNATURAL  
THAT JESUS IN-  
MSELF TO FALL  
FORE HIMSELF  
SHIP HIMSELF!

In Matthew 4:1-11, the Greek word *diabolos* (Devil) is used four times (verses 1, 5, 8, 11), while *satanas* (Satan) is used only once (verse 10). Even though “Satan” in verse 10 does not have the definite article attached to it, it is nevertheless implied, since the passage mentions “*the Devil*” (with the definite article) four times in the same context.

Furthermore, we need to ask who it was that tempted Jesus in the desert. Matthew claims it was “*the Devil*” (Matt 4:1, 5, 8, 11), referring to him as “*the Tempter*” in verse 3. Throughout the context “*the Devil*” is given personal attributes and clearly distinguished from Jesus as being another person. Nowhere in this context is there the slightest hint that “*the Devil*” is merely referring to an “evil urge” or sinful fleshly human nature inside Jesus.

Did Jesus have a *sin nature* that spoke to Him and tempted Him to turn stones into bread, to throw Himself down from the temple, and to *worship that sin nature* that was tempting Him? How *absurd* it is to think that some supposed sin nature of Jesus demanded that Jesus worship it! Anthony Buzzard emphasizes the error of that idea:

The Christadelphians are unable to agree about the identity of the Tempter of Jesus [Matt 4:1-11]. Most contemporary Christadelphians insist that **Jesus was talking to himself** in the wilderness. Apart from the difficulty which this raises about the sinlessness of the Lord, it is arbitrary in the extreme to say that when Matthew reports that the Tempter “came up to Jesus

and spoke” (Matt 4:3), he meant that **Jesus’ own mind produced twisted versions of the Scriptures**. Matthew ends the description of the Temptation by saying that the Devil departed and angels “came up to him” to minister to him (Matt 4:11). On what principle of interpretation can we justify taking the words “came up to him” in two totally different senses in the same paragraph? Where in Scripture does human nature come up to a person and speak, and hold an extended conversation? **It is most unnatural to think that Jesus invited himself to fall down before himself and worship himself!** [boldface emphasis mine]

Furthermore, if Jesus did have a sin nature, then He was not sinless, and therefore was not God incarnate. Do you see how this Christadelphian doctrine about Satan leads to denial of the Deity of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity! Not only is it absurd, it is blasphemy against the sinless Divine Son of God.

Nor is there any indication here in this context that “the Tempter” was just another human being such as the Jewish high priest Annas (which is one of the views of Satan suggested by some Christadelphians). This interpretation is negated automatically by the fact that no Jewish high priest would have invited Jesus to “fall down and worship him,” nor was any high priest such as Annas (or any other human being) ever in a position to give “all the kingdoms of the world and their glory” to Jesus, even if He had “fallen down and worshipped” that human being!

The high priestly interpretation is further refuted by the use of the *definite article* with the word “Devil.” Matthew is obviously referring to a *particular* Devil with whom his readers were already familiar (i.e., the same Devil or Satan who tempted Eve and Job and all the other Old Testament saints). That very connection is made three times in the book of Revelation, as well as here in the gospel of Matthew. Notice the identification of “*the Devil*” with the Dragon, the Serpent of old, and Satan in the following texts (NAS95):

Rev 12:9 *And the great Dragon was thrown down, the Serpent of old who is called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.*

Rev 20:2 *And he laid hold of the Dragon, the Serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; . . .*

Rev 20:10 *And the Devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they*

...continued on page 12

# Satan

by Ed Stevens

*will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

Matt 25:41 Then He will also say to those on His left, “Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the **eternal fire** which has been prepared for **the Devil and his angels**; . . .”

Note that both Revelation 12:9 and Matthew 25:41 connect this same Devil with “his angels” and say that they all will be thrown into the “eternal fire,” or “Lake of Fire,” where they would be “tormented day and night forever and ever.” This is obviously talking about an *angelic being who had other angels under his command*—NOT about a mere human being such as the Jewish high priest Annas! Anthony Buzzard agrees:

It is remarkable that the numerous attempts of the Christadelphians to explain away the personal Devil nearly always avoid a detailed analysis of Matthew 4, the temptation story. It should be obvious to any reader of the passage . . . that an external person tempted Jesus; and that external person was called *the Tempter, the Devil, the Satan*. The use of the [definite] article means only that it is “the Devil we all know about.” (To suggest, as some Christadelphians do, that it was the High Priest [Annas] *is a desperate evasion!*) [bracketed word and italics added]

If Matthew had been referring to a human being, there would be unambiguous language in the context to indicate such. As it stands, however, Matthew provides no hint that he is referring to any other “devil” or “satan” than the same angelic being he mentions in Matthew 25:41. Without such a

clear distinction given in the context of Matthew 4, the reader *can only conclude* that it is *the same angelic Devil or Satan* to whom he referred in Matthew 25:41.

## Conclusion

The Christadelphian claim that the Devil who tempted Jesus was either the sin nature of Jesus, or another human being like the High Priest, *is clearly wrong*. The *sinless* Divine Son of God did not have a *sin nature*, nor was any other human being ever in a position to give Jesus “all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.” Only a **real angelic being**, like the one who tempted Eve and Job, was ever able to do that. †

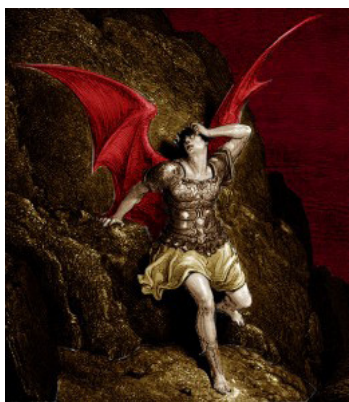
For More Information:

- *Who Do You Say I AM?* by Ed Stevens is a book-length defense of the Deity of Christ and the Trinity which also deals with Satan’s temptation of Jesus, clearly showing that Satan was a real angelic being. This book can be ordered from the IPA website at [www.preterist.org](http://www.preterist.org).
- Free PDF lesson outline entitled, “Deity of Christ and the Trinity,” which is a transcript of my podcast on June 29, 2014. To receive it, send an email request to me ([preterist1@preterist.org](mailto:preterist1@preterist.org)).

<sup>1</sup>Anthony F. Buzzard, “Satan, the Personal Devil,” accessed July 10, 2014, <http://www.mindspring.com/~anthonybuzzard/satan.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



## Then and Now—Preterist Podcast

Presented by Ed Stevens

A weekly podcast in which we explore first-century Christian history from a preterist perspective and apply those historical lessons to our life in the kingdom today. Posted each Sunday afternoon at:

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## Drifting

*Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. (Hebrews 2:1)*

“LEST AT ANY TIME WE LET THEM SLIP,” or more literally, “lest we be floated past them,” or “drift away from them.”

The picture is that of a boat’s being carried along with the current, the occupants unaware of the fact that they are drifting. Before they realize it they are nearing the cataract, far past the old landmarks, and danger is at hand, and possibly destruction.

Drifting is one of the easiest and pleasantest means of locomotion, but it is also a most treacherous and dangerous one. No effort is needed to drift, and as one glides down the river toward sure death, the feeling is one of well-being and contentment, with accompanying delightful drowsiness. The downward movement is hardly perceptible, for as the boat moves down the river

it seems to remain motionless. The water moves with the boat and appearances are deceitful. Unless one awakens in time, the danger is very real.

This was the condition of the church to which the author was writing. They were drifting spiritually, and did not sense their danger. Slowly they were nearing the precipice, and soon it would be too late.

For every one who falls into great sin, there are ten who are drifting. Even where one seems to leap suddenly into sin, it is often the case that he has previously been drifting, unnoticed by others and perhaps by himself. Most open sin begins by slowly drifting. Therefore, let all beware.

*The Book of Hebrews, M. L. Andreasen, pp. 81-82*

# Creation to Consummation

## Satan's Influence after AD 70?

by Ed Stevens

OUR CRITICS OFTEN ASK why sin and evil still exist in the world if Satan has already been cast into the Lake of Fire. Their question follows this logic:

- *Major Premise:* If all sin originates with Satan and his minions, and
- *Minor Premise:* If Satan's influence on mankind has been removed completely,
- *Conclusion:* Then there should be no more sin in the world (i.e., universal reconciliation and sinless perfection on earth)

The *major premise* assumes that all temptation and influence to sin originate only from Satan and his host of fallen angels. However, if temptation and influence to sin comes also from our own fallen human nature, then the casting of Satan into the Lake of Fire does not eliminate the existence of all temptation and sin. Notice what James the brother of Jesus said about this:

*Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is **drawn away by his own desires and enticed**. (James 1:13-14 NKJV; cf. Gen 8:21; Jer 17:9; and Rom 7:5, 21)*

James explicitly says that not all temptation and sin comes from Satan, but also comes from our own sinful desires. This invalidates the *major premise*, which in turn negates the *conclusion*—but our work is not yet done. We also need to examine the *minor premise*, which claims that all influence from Satan was completely eliminated when he was cast into the Lake of Fire. Before challenging that claim, however, we first need to show from Scripture that Satan was indeed thrown into the Lake of Fire. Consider the following:

### Satan is in the Lake of Fire

- God promised Adam and Eve that one of their descendants would *crush* the Serpent's head (Gen 3:15). In AD 58, Paul wrote that the day of Satan's crushing was "soon" to arrive (Rom 16:20):

*And I will put enmity between you [Satan] and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; **He shall bruise you on the head**, and you shall bruise him on the heel. (Gen 3:15)*

*The God of peace will **soon crush Satan** under your feet. (Rom 16:20)*

- God told the Old Testament prophets Daniel and Zechariah that in the days of the Messiah, sin

would be atoned for, vision and prophecy would be sealed up, and the prophets and the unclean spirit would be removed from the land:

*Seventy weeks have been decreed . . . to finish the transgression, to **make an end of sin**, to **make atonement** for iniquity, to bring in **everlasting righteousness**, to **seal up vision and prophecy** and to anoint the most holy place. (Dan 9:24)*

*In that day a fountain will be opened . . . for sin and for impurity. ". . . I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and . . . I will also **remove the prophets and the unclean spirit** from the land." (Zech 13:1-2)*

- The demons (unclean spirits) asked Jesus if he had come to "*torment [them] before the time*." This indicates that demon possession would not continue beyond a certain time. Peter and Jude indicate that the appointed time would be at "*the judgment of the great day*"—the specific time of judgment which Peter, writing in AD 63, said was about to begin (1 Peter 4:17). This agrees with the description of the judgment found in Matthew 25:31-46, where Jesus said that "*the eternal fire*" and "*eternal punishment*" had been prepared and reserved for the devil and his angels, and that this final judgment would occur at the Parousia:

*And they cried out, saying, "What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have You come here to **torment us before the time**?" (Matt 8:29)*

*For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but **cast them into Tartarus** and committed them to **pits of darkness, reserved for judgment** . . . (2 Pet 2:4)*

*And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has **kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day** . . . **the punishment of eternal fire**. (Jude 1:6-7)*

*Then He will also say to those on His left, "Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the **eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels** . . . These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (Matt 25:41, 46)*

- The book of Revelation also teaches that the Devil (Satan) was cast into the Lake of Fire at the end of the Millennium, after having been released for



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## Studies in Redemptive History

a short time to deceive the nations into attacking the Church (the Neronian persecution). Immediately after that tribulation, Christ came with His angels to judge His enemies and cast them into the Lake of Fire.

*When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. (Rev 20:7-10)*

From the above, it seems obvious that Satan and his minions were indeed cast into the Lake of Fire in AD 70, where they are being “tormented day and night forever and ever.” What is not quite as clear, however, is what that implies about Satan’s influence in the world after AD 70.

### Satan’s Influence after AD 70

Most Preterists assume that after Satan was cast into the Lake of Fire, he has no more access to or influence upon humanity of any kind. However, there are other Preterists who think that he might still have some kind of limited influence in one or more of the following ways:

- Greatly limited but not totally eliminated
- Limited to only a few very specific activities
- Limited to individuals now, rather than against the Plan of Redemption, or the establishment of the Kingdom (or Church)
- His power over the afterlife of Christians has been totally eliminated, but not necessarily all of his influence over us in our present earthly lives
- While his influence upon Christians may only be indirect or residual, his influence upon the unbelieving world could still be direct and substantial
- Even though Satan is in the Lake of Fire now, he is still in the Unseen realm, from which he was

always able to have some influence on humanity, no matter which part of the Unseen realm he happened to be in at the time

Thus, while it is certain that Satan is a permanent resident in the Lake of Fire, and has no more *direct* access to or power over Christians after AD 70, it is not so clear whether he still might have some *indirect* or *residual* influence on Christians. Even if he has no influence on Christians, he might still have some influence on non-Christians.

What do we mean by *indirect* or *residual* influence? The illustrations of Hitler and Stalin are often cited as examples of evil villains who, even though they are dead, still exert a powerful influence in the world decades after their demise. If nothing more, Satan at least has that kind of *indirect* and *residual* influence today, even upon Christians.

As the Apostle Paul warned, “We do not want to be ignorant of his devices, lest he take advantage of us” (2 Cor 2:11 paraphrase). Satan would desire nothing more than to have us think that he is no longer a threat to us in any way, in which case we will drop our shields and leave ourselves vulnerable. If there is any way to do us harm, Satan will surely do it, even if it is only *indirect* and *residual*. To ignore that threat is not only foolish, but also spiritually dangerous. The safest course for us Christians is to not let our guard down.

Some Preterists have fallen for the unbiblical notions that Satan was never a real angelic being in the first place, or that he is no longer in existence today after AD 70, or that since AD 70 he has had absolutely no influence of any kind upon anyone. Those ideas appear to be LIES straight from the “father of lies” (John 8:44). It certainly leads to our spiritual disadvantage when we embrace those delusions, and sets us up for even worse deception.

### Keep Our Armor On

In the spiritual kingdom of Christ, we no longer build His kingdom by using physical weapons of warfare against “flesh and blood” enemies like the Israelites did in their conquest of Canaan, because our struggle is not against that kind of opponent. Nor are we still fighting the same angelic and demonic war in which the first-century saints were engaged. Nevertheless, we are still in a desperate spiritual struggle against our own fleshly

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# Objection Overruled!

## *A Response to Brock Hollett - part 2*

by Don K. Preston

IN OUR FIRST RESPONSE to Brock Hollett's article "My Journey Into And Out of Full Preterism," we took note of the purely subjective nature of Hollett's "objections." He offered no exegesis, but did claim that he now possesses special Spirit-given insight into the true meaning of prophecy. His new found eschatology, by his own admission, is not based on exegesis, sound hermeneutic, or solid logic because those principles only lead to confusion.

Hollett's main problem with preterism seems to have been the resurrection. He rejected the idea of a corporate salvation, a corporate body resurrection, claiming that in a "survey of the scriptures, the Lord moved in my heart in a way that surprised me."

So, once again, we find an appeal to emotional subjectivism, not biblical exegesis. This should be disturbing to anyone that reads Hollett's "objections." But, even worse, when one actually reads his claims regarding the resurrection, they will quickly find they are unfounded, with a tendency to deny, overlook, or ignore contextual statements that posit the resurrection in view at the end of Israel's Old Covenant history—not before, and not after.

I want to begin where Hollett begins in his "argument" for the raising of individual human corpses, noting again the fact that *he performs no exegesis*. Do you catch the power of that? No exegesis! Merely assumptions that are unproven (and unprovable) that smack more of preconceived ideas than anything. Hollett begins with Isaiah 26:19-21:

*"Your dead shall live;  
Together with my dead body they shall arise.  
Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust;  
For your dew is like the dew of herbs,  
And the earth shall cast out the dead.  
Come, my people, enter your chambers,  
And shut your doors behind you;  
Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment,  
Until the indignation is past.  
For behold, the Lord comes out of His place  
To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity;  
The earth will also disclose her blood,  
And will no more cover her slain."* (NKJV)

I must confess amazement that Hollett would begin his appeal for the resurrection of individual human corpses by citing this text. Doing so shows that he has totally ignored the actual context.

Notice the referent to "in dust." In chapter 25:10f we find reference to "Moab" (being used symbolically, it seems, for God's enemy). The promise was: "Moab shall be trampled down under Him . . . his walls He will bring down to the ground, **down to the dust.**"

The word *dust* is being used metaphorically of defeat and destruction. Just as Israel's enemy (symbolized under the name Moab) had brought her down to the dust, likewise

God's enemies would be brought down to the dust. Hollett has completely ignored the Hebraic thought that permeates this—and the other—resurrection texts. The motif at work here is humiliation versus glorification/vindication.

Levenson provides helpful insight into the Hebraic thought of death and resurrection:

"The sources in the Hebrew Bible, as we have seen, have a definition of death that is broader than ours. That is why they can see exile, for example, as death and repatriation as life, in a sense that seems contrived (to state it negatively), or artful (to put it positively), to us but probably did not seem so to the original authors and audiences. In part, this is because the ancient Israelites, altogether lacking the corporealist penchant of thought so powerful in modernity, did not conceive of death and life as purely and exclusively biological phenomena. These things were, rather, social in character, and could not, therefore, be disengaged from the historical fate of the subjects of whom they are predicated. Or, to put it differently, death and life in the Hebrew Bible are often best seen as relational events and are for the selfsame reason inseparable from the personal circumstances of those described as living or as dead. To be alive in this frequent biblical sense of the word inevitably entailed more than existing in a certain physical state." (Jon Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2006; 154-155).

Hollett has clearly ignored the Hebraic world view in his assessment of Isaiah.

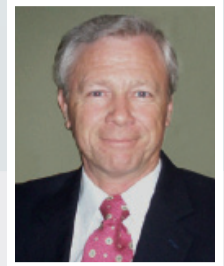
So, in chapter 26:19, we find the promise that the enemies of God would *not* rise from the dust, nonetheless, *Israel would rise from the dust*. This is referent to the corporate body of Israel. Moab is patently a corporate reference, and notice that in v. 20 YHWH calls Israel "My people," also a corporate term (cf. Isaiah 52:1 as a parallel text, in which Jerusalem was "in the dust" but YHWH would call her out of the dust to be remarried to Him).

Notice a couple of markers in the text that Hollett has conveniently ignored and omitted. Isaiah 26 clearly and undeniably posits the resurrection prophecy at the time when the blood of the martyrs would be vindicated. For those who will accept biblical authority—and not rely on subjective emotions—Jesus' words in Matthew 23:33f are the final authority on the time when the blood of the martyrs would be vindicated:

*"Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of*



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*Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"*

Now, of course, Hollett has informed us that he was "led" to the conclusion that the time statements about when the eschatological consummation would take place—i.e., the statements of the imminent end—are actually mysterious statements that cannot be taken seriously. That, of course, is the only way he can maintain any semblance of futurism. He has to ignore, distort, or deny literally scores of expressions of imminence, expressed in a wide variety of words, terms, and phrases in order to escape the force of the language.<sup>1</sup>

Notice also that in Isaiah 27:9-12, which is connected to chapter 26 and the prediction of the resurrection by the "in that day" references, Israel's salvation would be in the day of her judgment:

*"Therefore by this the iniquity of Jacob will be covered; And this is all the fruit of taking away his sin: When he makes all the stones of the altar Like chalkstones that are beaten to dust, Wooden images and incense altars shall not stand. Yet the fortified city will be desolate, The habitation forsaken and left like a wilderness; There the calf will feed, and there it will lie down And consume its branches. When its boughs are withered, they will be broken off; The women come and set them on fire. For it is a people of no understanding; Therefore He who made them will not have mercy on them, And He who formed them will show them no favor."*

So, the resurrection of Israel would be the salvation of Israel. But, the salvation of Israel would come at the time of the judgment of Israel (for shedding that innocent blood of 26:21). That time of judgment would be when the fortified city would be desolated, the altar destroyed, and the people who had been created by YHVH would be forgotten!

These are not some vague, generic, "mysterious" statements that the end was "near" or "at hand." The framework for the resurrection—no matter what your concept of that might be, is unequivocally and undeniably posited at the time of the vindication of the martyrs (AD 70 per Jesus) when the City and the Temple would be destroyed, and Old Covenant Israel herself "forgotten." (This text alone falsifies much of Hollett's new found theology, as he claims that Israel remains God's covenant people with an eschatological future).

Hollett agrees that Daniel 12 alludes back to Isaiah 26. But, unfortunately for Hollett, just like Isaiah 26-27, Daniel is fatal to any idea of a future raising of corpses out of the ground. Furthermore, Daniel is, if possible, even more graphically clear about when the promised resurrection would occur.

Notice that Daniel foretold the resurrection, the time of the end, and even the time of the rewarding of the prophets (v.

12-13). In verse 6 one angel asked another "When shall these things be, and when shall all of these things be fulfilled?" Great question, right? Well, according to Hollett, we really can't take the answer seriously since, once again, the timing of the fulfillment of Bible prophecy is a mystery. That is, unless you have that special, direct, prophetic insight that Hollett now claims to possess, in which case one (ostensibly) has the right to reject the biblical testimony. This is truly sad.

But, for those who accept the Bible's authority as final, Daniel 12:7 is definitive and determinative. Heaven answered the question of the first angel: "*When the power of the holy people is completely shattered, all of these things will be fulfilled.*"

At this juncture, we need to note that Hollett is now (seemingly) taking what is an increasingly popular view that Daniel 12 was fulfilled in AD 70, but that AD 70 was an "already-but-not-yet" judgment upon a "last days" generation that divinely foreshadowed the final desolation of Jerusalem that will occur upon the generation living at "the time of the End." In my book, *AD 70 A Shadow of the "Real" End?* I completely refute this specious claim. There is not a shred of biblical evidence to prove this claim. And, if AD 70 did not foreshadow something greater yet in our future, then all futurism, including Hollett's, is false. This book has quickly become one of our best-selling titles.

Hollett justifies his claim with three (unsubstantiated and false) claims. Space demands only a brief response to each point:

1.) Jesus deliberately used "versatile language." That is, He used language that can be understood "either way."

**Response:** There is no "either/or" indication in Jesus' words. Only when we have a preconceived idea that AD 70 could not have been the end of the age that Jesus had in mind would we ever seek for something beyond that. Whereas Jesus emphatically posited fulfillment of "*all of these things*" in His generation, Hollett is forced to deny that, and say that not all of those things were fulfilled. This is, to reiterate, a rejection of the authority of Scripture and of Christ Himself. And it should be noted that Hollett offered us not one word of proof for his "either/or" claim—he merely asserted it. That is not enough.

2.) There are indications of delay in the Olivet Discourse, including the "unknowability" of the timing of fulfillment.

**Response:** Once again, Hollett offers no proof for his claims. He simply appeals to the fact that Jesus said: "*but of that day and hour knows no man, but my father only*" and offers not a shred of evidence to support his presupposition that this must refer to a time beyond AD 70.

The fact is that in Matthew 24:36 Jesus is drawing directly from Zechariah 14. And what is so significant is that Zechariah clearly and undeniably posited the Day of the Lord—the Day known only to the Lord—as the time of

...continued on page 18



## Response to Hollett

Don K. Preston

... continued from p. 17

the judgment of Jerusalem!<sup>2</sup>

The point is that Zechariah foretold the Day of the Lord in judgment of Jerusalem as the Day known only to the Lord. Jesus, predicting the fall of Jerusalem, said it was the Day known only to the Lord.

So, if Zechariah could say that the Lord's coming against Jerusalem was known only to the Lord, then surely Jesus could do the same! And this destroys Hollett's argument.

As to the claim that there are "indications of a delay" of the parousia, this too is specious. The only "delay" was the delay that took place within the generation destined to see the fulfillment of "*all of these things*" and that was unequivocally Jesus' generation. The writer of Hebrews assured his audience that any long delay was outside of God's plan: "*And now, in a very, very little while and the one who is coming will come, and will not delay*" (10:37). Hollett says God delayed the parousia. God said He was not going to delay. Again, see my *Who Is This Babylon?* for a full discussion of Matthew 24:36, and a wealth of evidence demonstrating that Jesus was not speaking of an event different from AD 70.

3.) The non-fulfillment of many details of the prophecy, such as the Abomination of Desolation foretold by Daniel.

**Response:** Once again, we have only Hollett's presuppositional claims, with no evidence. Consider the following:

The Abomination of Desolation would bring on the Great Tribulation (Matt 24:15f).

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## Satan's Influence

by Ed Stevens

... continued from p. 15

human nature, as well as against the wickedness of others who want to destroy us or lead us astray. Ken Davies points out who our current enemies are:

Just because the devil is in Gehenna now, doesn't mean we have no more battles with evil. We still have our flesh to deal with, as well as the "enemies of the gospel," the children of the evil one. The "father of lies" (John 8:44) is put down, but he still has his "seed" in the world (Gen 3:15; John 8:44)—those who will never submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. . . .

The reason we see evil in existence today is because human beings are evil by nature. We have the sinful inclinations of our father, Adam, and those who remain unregenerate have the nature of their father, the devil (Satan). This doesn't mean that Satan is having a direct influence, but that his kids are running around acting like him. This may be called an "indirect influence," but certainly nothing he is able to do or control now.<sup>1</sup>

Mortal flesh is still just as weak and subject to temptation and sin as it ever was, so we still need to put on the whole armor of God (Eph 6:10-20) in order to "*stand firm*" against those temptations and the attacks of the enemies of the gospel. We dare not lower our shields and become slaves again to our fleshly desires (cf. Rom 6-8). Chuck Coty emphasizes the continuing necessity of putting on our spiritual armor after AD 70:

I find it strange that the Apostle Paul chose to spend so many words exhorting the pre-70 saints to put on the armor of God (Eph 6:10-20), if by the time his letter to the Ephesians was fully circulated, the devil was permanently eliminated. That would mean that the armor was only necessary for a very little while! At this point, simply trotting out Romans 16:20 is not quite enough for me to close the book on the devil's influence. It is clear now, after the Parousia, that the Devil no longer has the power of the Second Death, since he himself has been cast into the Lake of Fire (which is the Second Death). However, that does not preclude the possibility that he still has some sort of limited, indirect, or residual influence, against which we Christians today still need to employ the full armor of God.<sup>2</sup>

It now seems conclusive that the *minor premise* listed at the beginning of this article, which claimed that all influence of Satan was eliminated in AD 70, is not only fallacious, but also spiritually dangerous. It is much safer and wiser for Christians today to keep our full spiritual armor on "*so that we will be able not only to stand firm*" against our own weaknesses of the flesh and the enemies of the Cross, but also to "*destroy speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ*" (2 Cor 10:5). ✚

<sup>1</sup> Ken Davies, personal email, n.d.

<sup>2</sup> Chuck Coty, personal email, n.d.

The 144,000 of Revelation 7 and 14—the righteous remnant—would experience the Great Tribulation—which of course demands that the Abomination would occur in their lifetime.

But, the 144,000 were *the first fruit of those redeemed to God* from among men (Rev 14:2; and consider that John said he was in “*the tribulation*” Rev 1:9). First fruit means just that! It does not mean the fruit of 40 or 50 generations later!

*This means that they were the first generation of Jewish Christians!*

Do you catch the power of that? Watch the argument therefore:

**The 144,000 would experience the Great Tribulation (they would also witness the Abomination of Desolation).**

**But, the 144,000 were the first generation of Jewish Christians (Rev 14).**

**Therefore, the Abomination of Desolation and the Great Tribulation occurred in the first-century generation.<sup>3</sup>**

Without any question therefore, Hollett’s claims for the “non-fulfillment” of Matthew 24 are false. But of course, if Matthew 24 was in fact fulfilled in AD 70, Hollett’s futurism is also false.

Hollett appeals to the raising of “corpses” at different times as proof that there must one day be a literal raising of corpses. However, what he is clearly overlooking (or ignoring) is the “sign” nature of those events.

Signs never point to themselves. They point to something else, something greater. In John’s gospel, for instance, we find seven of Jesus’ miracles, including the physical resurrection of Jesus. Notice what John 20:30-31 says of those miracles:

*“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”*

Now, did Jesus turning the water to wine signify a coming time when he will turn the ocean into wine? Did the feeding of the five thousand signify a future event in which he will once again, turn loaves and fishes into a literal meal?

In every miracle recorded, the physical, literal event pointed to a *spiritual reality*—never another, greater, physical reality! And yet, that is precisely what Hollett must produce. He must bring forth substantive evidence that the physical raising of dead human corpses pointed forward to the raising of more decomposed bodies. And for that, he offered no proof, but merely assertions based on presuppositions.

In summary, what do we have? We have the following:

Brock Hollett relies on divine, direct revelation from God for his understanding of Bible prophecy. Yet, that claimed “enlightenment” contradicts the emphatic, repeated, and unequivocal biblical statements.

Hollett appeals to texts for support of the raising of

individual corpses, when a look at the context falsifies that claim. The context is undeniably referent, not to biological death or human corpses, but to the “death” of the “body of Israel” alienated from God.

Hollett ignores, denies, or perverts the unmistakable context and framework for the fulfillment of the very resurrection texts to which he appeals. That resurrection would be when Old Covenant Israel would be destroyed: City and Sanctuary, when Israel would be “forgotten,” i.e., covenantally rejected.

Hollett creates false claims about the non-fulfillment, or the typological fulfillment of events, and yet, never offered us a scintilla of proof. His claims fly in the face of the biblical statements.

In truth, Hollett’s claims are summarized in this: “those who operate in the flesh and embrace an academic approach to Scripture apart from the revelation of the Spirit will receive strong delusions. Yet those given prophetic insight will understand the things concerning the time of the End (Dan 11:33; 12:10). God has mysteriously ‘*hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*’ in Christ so that, ‘*no one may delude you with plausible arguments*’ (Col 2:2-4).”

So, to Hollett, “plausible arguments,” an “academic approach to Scripture,” and reliance on the actual text of Scripture, coupled with logic and sound hermeneutic, leads only to “strong delusions.” Only if you have that very special “prophetic insight,” which of course he claims to now possess, can you understand the text of Scripture.

The Bible knows of no such approach to Bible study. The Bible itself utilizes sound principles of logic and argumentation. While it says that we must—to be sure—compare “*spiritual things with spiritual things*” this is not the principle to which Hollett appeals!

What we have seen, then, based on the inspired words of the texts examined, is that Hollett’s “reasons” for abandoning the truth of Covenant Eschatology are not evidentiary in nature. They are subjective, and emotive. If for no other reason—although there are plenty of others—his Objection is Overruled! †

<sup>1</sup> See my book, *Who Is This Babylon?*, for one of the most extensive discussions of these time statements to be found anywhere. In that book, I thoroughly refute the specious claims expressed by Hollett and his sources. That book is available from my websites: [www.eschatology.org](http://www.eschatology.org) or [www.bibleprophecy.com](http://www.bibleprophecy.com). Mention that you read about it in this article and I will refund your postage.

<sup>2</sup> See my article that develops this somewhat: <http://donkpreston.com/matthew-24-but-of-that-day-and-hour-knows-no-man-a-response-to-a-visitor-6/>.

<sup>3</sup> See my book, *Blast From the Past: The Truth About Armageddon*, for a complete discussion of this issue.

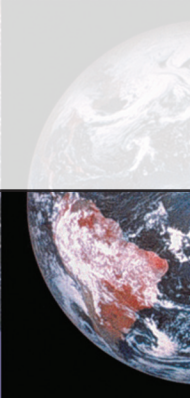




## In This Issue:

Who or What is Satan?

Responding to  
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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!*